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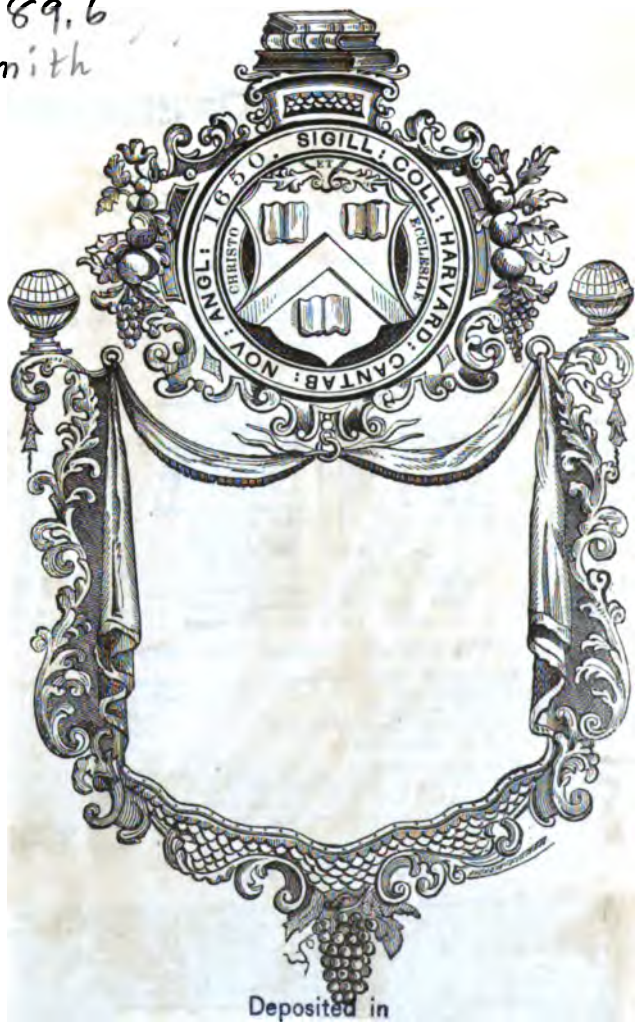

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THOUGHTS,

Critical and Practical,

ON THE

BOOK OF REVELATION.

By URIAH SMITH,

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PREFACE.

AN increase of knowledge respecting the prophetic portions of the word of God, was to be one of the characteristics of the last days. Said the angel to Daniel, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" or, as Michælis' translation reads, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even unto the time of the end, when many shall give their *sedulous attention* to the understanding of *these things*, and knowledge shall be increased." While it is true that, of later years, knowledge has marvelously increased in every department of science, yet it is evident that this prophecy specially contemplates an increase of knowledge concerning those prophecies that are designed to give us light in reference to the close of this dispensation, and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God. The fulfillment of the prophecy in the increase of this knowledge, is one of the pleasing signs of the present time. For about half a century, light upon the prophetic word has been increasing, and shining with ever-growing luster to our own day.

In no portion of the word of God is this more apparent than in the book of Revelation; and we may well congratulate ourselves in this; for no other part of that word deals so largely in prophecies that pertain to the closing scenes of this earth's history. No other book contains so many chains of prophecy reaching down to the end. In no other book is the grand procession of events that leads us through to the termination of probationary time, and ushers us into the

realities of the eternal state, so fully and minutely set forth. No other book embraces so completely, as it were in one grand sweep, all the truths that concern the last generation of the inhabitants of the earth, and sets forth so comprehensively all the aspects of the times, physical, moral, and political, in which the triumph of earthly woe and wickedness shall end, and the eternal reign of righteousness begin. It is to call attention especially to these features of the book of Revelation, which seem heretofore to have been too generally overlooked, or misinterpreted, that these Thoughts are now offered to the public.

No effort to arrive at a correct understanding of the book of Revelation needs any apology. The Lord of the prophecy has himself pronounced a blessing upon him that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. And it is with an honest purpose of aiding somewhat in arriving at this understanding, which is set forth by this language as not only possible but praiseworthy, that the following pages have been prepared, and are now commended to the careful and candid attention of the reader.

U. S.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., 1881.

THOUGHTS ON THE REVELATION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Revelation, usually termed "The Apocalypse," from its Greek name, Ἀποκάλυψις, meaning "a disclosure, a revelation," has been described to be "a panorama of the glory of Christ." In the Evangelists we have the record of his humiliation, his condescension, his toil and sufferings, his patience, his mockings and scourgings by those who should have done him reverence, and finally his death upon the shameful cross,—a death esteemed in that age to be the most ignominious that men could inflict. In the Revelation we have the gospel of his enthronement in glory, his association with the Father upon the throne of universal dominion, his overruling providence among the nations of the earth, and his coming again—not a homeless stranger—but in power and great glory to punish his enemies and reward his followers. "A voice has cried in the wilderness, 'Behold the Lamb of God;' a voice will soon proclaim from Heaven, 'Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah!'"

Scenes of glory surpassing fable are unveiled

before us in this book. Appeals of unwonted power bear down upon the impenitent from its sacred pages, in threatenings of judgment that have no parallel in any other portion of the book of God. Consolation which no language can describe is here given to the humble followers of Christ in this lower world, in glorious views of Him upon whom help for them has been laid,—Him who has the key of David, who holds his ministers in his own right hand, who, though he was once dead, is now alive forevermore, and assures us that he is the triumphant possessor of the keys of death and the grave, and who has given to every overcomer the multiplied promise of walking with him in white, having a crown of life, partaking of the fruit of the tree of life which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, and being raised up to sit with him upon his own glorious throne. No other book takes us at once, and so irresistibly, into another sphere. Long vistas are here opened before us, which are bounded by no terrestrial objects, but carry us forward into other worlds. And if ever themes of thrilling and impressive interest, and grand and lofty imagery, and sublime and magnificent description, can invite the attention of mankind, then the Revelation invites us to a careful study of its pages, which urge upon our notice the realities of a momentous future, and an unseen world.

Chapter I.

THE INTRODUCTORY VISION.

THE book opens with the announcement of its title and a benediction:—

VERSES 1-3. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.

The Title. The translators of our common version of the Bible have given this book the title of "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." In this they contradict the very first words of the book itself, which declare it to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is the Revelator, not John. John is but the penman employed by Christ to write out this Revelation for the benefit of his church. There is no doubt that the John here mentioned is the person of that name who was the beloved and highly favored one among the twelve apostles. He was evangelist and apostle, and the writer of the gospel and epistles which bear his

name. See Clarke, Barnes, Kitto, Pond, and others. To his previous titles he now adds that of prophet; for the Revelation is a prophecy. But the matter of this book is traced back to a still higher source. It is not only the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but it is the Revelation which God gave unto him. It comes, then, first, from the great fountain of all wisdom and truth, God the Father; by him it was communicated to Jesus Christ, the Son; and Christ sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John.

The Character of the Book. This is expressed in one word, "Revelation." A revelation is something revealed, something clearly made known, not something hidden and concealed. Moses, in Deut. 29 : 29, tells us that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which *are revealed* belong unto us and to our children forever." The very title of the book, then, is a sufficient refutation of the popular opinion of to-day, that this book is among the hidden mysteries of God, and cannot be understood. Were this the case, it should bear some such title as "The Mystery," or "The Hidden Book;" certainly not that of "The Revelation."

Its Object. "To show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." His servants—who are they? Is there any limit? For whose benefit was the Revelation given? For any specified persons? For any particular churches? For any special period of time? No: it is for all the church in all time, so long as any of the events

therein predicted remain to be accomplished. It is for all those who can claim the appellation of "his servants," wherever or whenever they may live. But this language brings up again the popular view that the Revelation is not to be understood. God says it was given to show something to his servants; and yet many of the expounders of his word tell us that it does not show anything, because no man can understand it! As though God would undertake to make known to mankind some important truths, and yet fall into the worse than earthly folly of clothing them in language or in figures which human minds could not comprehend! As though he would command a person to behold some distant object, and then erect an impenetrable barrier between him and the object specified! Or as though he would give his servants a light to guide them through the gloom of night, and yet throw over that light a pall so thick and heavy that not a ray of its brightness could penetrate the obscuring folds! How do they dishonor God who thus trifle with his word! No: the Revelation will accomplish the object for which it was given, and "his servants" will learn therefrom "the things which must shortly come to pass," and which concern their eternal salvation.

His Angel. Christ sent and made known the Revelation to John by "his angel." A particular angel seems here to be brought to view. What angel could appropriately be called Christ's angel? May we not find an answer to this question in a

significant passage in the prophecy of Daniel? In Dan. 10 : 21, an angel, which was doubtless Gabriel (see Dan. chaps. 9, 10, and 11 : 1), in making known some important truths to Daniel, said, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." Who Michael is we easily learn. Jude, verse 9, calls him the "archangel." And Paul tell us that when the Lord descends from Heaven, and the dead in Christ are raised, the voice of the archangel shall be heard. 1 Thess. 4 : 16. And whose voice will be heard at that amazing hour when the dead are called to life? The Lord himself replies, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear *his voice*," John 5 : 28; and the previous verse shows that the one here referred to, whose voice shall be heard, is the Son of man, or *Christ*. It is the voice of Christ, then, that calls the dead from their graves. That voice Paul declares is the voice of the archangel; and Jude says that the archangel is called Michael, the very personage mentioned in Daniel; and all referring to Christ. The statement in Daniel, then, is, that the truths to be revealed to Daniel were committed to Christ, and confined exclusively to him, and to an angel whose name was Gabriel. Similar to the work of communicating important truth to the "beloved prophet," is the work of Christ in the Revelation of communicating important truth to the "beloved disciple;" and who, in this work, can be *his* angel, but he who was engaged with him in

the former work, that is, the angel Gabriel? This fact will throw light on some points in this book, while it would also seem most appropriate that the same being who was employed to carry messages to the principal prophet of the former dispensation, should perform the same office for him who corresponds to that prophet in the gospel age. See on chapter 19 : 10.

The Benediction. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." Is there so direct and formal a blessing pronounced upon the reading and observance of any other portion of the word of God? What encouragement, then, have we for its study! And shall we say that it cannot be understood? A blessing offered for the study of a book which it can do us no good to study? Men may assert, with more pertness than piety, that "every age of declension is marked by an increase of commentaries on the Apocalypse," or that "the study of the Revelation either finds or leaves a man mad;" but God has pronounced his blessing upon it, he has set the seal of his approbation to an earnest study of its marvelous pages; and with such encouragement from such a source, the child of God will be unmoved by a thousand feeble counterblasts from men.

Every fulfillment of prophecy brings its duties; hence there are things in the Revelation to be kept or performed; practical duties to be entered upon as the result of the accomplishment of prophecy. A notable instance of this kind may be seen in

chap. 14 : 12: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

But, says John, "The time is at hand." Another motive offered for the study of this book. It becomes more and more important as we draw near the great consummation. On this point we offer the impressive thoughts of another: "The importance of studying the Apocalypse increases with the lapse of time. Here are 'things which must shortly come to pass.' Even when John bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw, the long period within which those successive scenes were to be realized was at hand. If proximity then constituted a motive for heeding those contents, how much more does it now! Every revolving century, every closing year, adds to the urgency with which attention is challenged to the concluding portion of Holy Writ. And does not that intensity of devotion to the present, which characterizes our times and our country, enhance the reasonableness of this claim? Never, surely, was there a period when some mighty counteracting power was more needed. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, duly studied, supplies an appropriate corrective influence. Would that all Christians might, in fullest measure, receive the blessing of 'them that hear the words of this prophecy, and that keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.'"

Following the benediction, we have the dedication :—

VERSES 4–6. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The Churches in Asia. There were more churches in Asia than seven. We may confine ourselves to that western fraction of Asia, known as Asia Minor, or we may include still less territory than that; for in that small portion even of Asia Minor, where were situated the seven churches which are mentioned, and right in their very midst, there were other important churches. Colosse, to the Christians of which place Paul addressed his epistle to the Colossians, was but a slight distance from Laodicea. Miletus was nearer than any of the seven to Patmos, where John had his vision; and it was an important station for the church, as we may judge from the fact that Paul, during one of his stays there, sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet him at that place. Acts 20 : 17–38. At the same place he also left, in good Christian hands no doubt, Trophimus, his disciple, sick. 2 Tim. 4 : 20. And Troas, where Paul spent a season with the disciples, and having waited till the Sabbath was past, started off upon his journey, was not far removed from Pergamos, which is named among the seven. It becomes, therefore, an interesting

question, to determine why seven of the churches of Asia Minor were selected as the ones to which the Revelation should be dedicated. Does what is said *of* the seven churches in chap. 1, and *to* them in chaps. 2 and 3, have reference solely to the seven literal churches named, describing things only as they then and there existed, and portraying what was before them alone? We cannot so conclude, for the following reasons:—

1. The entire book of Revelation, see chap. 1 : 3, 11, 19; 22 : 18, 19, was dedicated to the seven churches. Verse 11. But the book was no more applicable to them than to other Christians in Asia Minor, those, for instance, who dwelt in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, addressed in 1 Peter 1 : 1, or the Christians of Colosse, Troas, and Miletus, in the very midst of the churches named.

2. Only a small portion of the book could have personally concerned the churches named, or any of the Christians of John's day; for the events it brings to view were mostly so far in the future as to be beyond the lifetime of the generation then living, and with which they could consequently have no personal connection.

3. The seven stars which the Son of man held in his right hand, verse 20, are declared to be the angels of the seven churches. The angels of the churches, doubtless all will be agreed, are the ministers of the churches. Their being held in the right hand of the Son of man denotes the upholding power, guidance, and protection, vouchsafed to them. But there were

only seven of them in his right hand. And are there only seven thus cared for by the great Master of assemblies? May not, rather, *all* the true ministers of the whole gospel age derive from this representation the consolation of knowing that they are upheld and guided by the right hand of the great Head of the church? Such would seem to be the only consistent conclusion.

4. Again, John, looking into the Christian dispensation, saw only seven candlesticks, representing seven churches, in the midst of which stood the Son of man. The position of the Son of man in their midst must denote his presence with them, his watch-care over them, and his searching scrutiny of all their works. But does he thus take cognizance of only seven individual churches in this dispensation? May we not rather conclude that this scene represents his position in reference to all his churches during the gospel age? Then why were only seven mentioned? Seven, as used in the Scriptures, is a number denoting fullness and completeness, being, doubtless, a kind of memorial of the great facts of the first seven days of time which have divided all ages into cycles of weeks. Like the seven stars, the seven candlesticks must denote the whole of the things which they represent. The whole gospel church in seven divisions or periods must be symbolized by them. And hence the seven churches must be applied in the same manner.

5. Why, then, were the seven particular churches chosen that are mentioned! For the reason, doubt-

less, that in the names of these churches, according to the definitions of the words, are brought out the religious features of those periods of the gospel age which they respectively represent.

For these reasons, we understand by "the seven churches," not merely the seven literal churches of Asia which went by the names mentioned, but seven periods of the Christian church, from the days of the apostles to the close of probation. See on chap. 2, verse 1.

The Source of Blessing. "From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come," or is to be,—an expression which signifies complete eternity, past and future, and can be applicable to God the Father only. This language, we believe, is never applied to Christ. He is spoken of as another person, in distinction from the being thus described.

The Seven Spirits. This expression probably has no reference to angels, but to the Spirit of God. It is one of the sources from which grace and peace are invoked for the church. Chap. 22 : 9. On the subject of the seven spirits, Thompson remarks: "That is, from the Holy Spirit, denominated 'the seven spirits,' because seven is a sacred and perfect number; not thus named as denoting interior plurality, but the fullness and perfection of his gifts and operations." Barnes says, "The number seven, therefore, may have been given by the Holy Spirit with reference to the *diversity* or the *fullness* of his operations on the souls of men, and to his manifold agency on the affairs of the world as further developed in this

book." Bloomfield gives this as the general interpretation.

His Throne. The throne of God, the Father; for Christ has not yet taken his own throne. The seven spirits being *before* the throne "may be intended to designate the fact that the Divine Spirit is ever ready to be sent forth, in accordance with a common representation in the Scriptures, to accomplish important purposes in human affairs."

And from Jesus Christ. Then Christ is not the person who, in the verse before, is designated as "Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." Some of the chief characteristics which pertain to Christ are here mentioned. He is

The Faithful Witness. Whatever he bears witness to, is true. Whatever he promises he will surely fulfill.

The First Begotten of the Dead. This expression is parallel to 1 Cor. 15 : 20, 23; Heb. 1 : 6; Rom. 8 : 29, and Col. 1 : 15, 18, where we find such expressions applied to Christ, as, "the first-fruits of them that slept," "the first-born among many brethren," "the first-born of every creature," and "the first-born from the dead." But we do not think that these expressions denote that he was the first in point of time to be raised from the dead; for others were raised before him. That would be a very unimportant point; but he was the chief and central figure of all who have come up from the grave; for it was by virtue of Christ's coming work and resurrection that any were raised before his time. In the purpose of

God, he was the first even in point of time as well as in importance; for it was not till the purpose of Christ's triumph over the grave was formed in the mind of God, who calleth those things that be not as though they were, Rom. 4 : 17, that any were released from the power of death, by virtue of that great fact which was, in due time, to be accomplished. Christ is therefore called the "first begotten of the dead," chap. 1 : 5, the "first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. 15 : 20, the "first-born among many brethren," Rom. 8 : 29, and "the first-born from the dead," Col. 1 : 18. In Acts 26 : 23, he is spoken of as "the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people," or the first who *by rising* from the dead should show light unto the people. See the Greek of this passage, and Bloomfield's note thereon; also, Man's Nature and Destiny, chap. 17.

The Prince of the Kings of the Earth. Christ is Prince of earthly kings in a certain sense now. Paul informs us in Eph. 1 : 20, 21, that he has been set at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, "far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." The highest names named in this world, are the princes, kings, emperors, and potentates of earth. But Christ is placed far above them. He is seated with his Father upon the throne of universal dominion, chap. 3 : 21, and ranks equally with him in the overruling and disposition of the nations and affairs of earth.

In a more particular sense Christ is to be Prince of the kings of the earth when he takes his own throne, and the kingdoms of this world *become* the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, when they are given by the Father into his hands, and he comes forth bearing upon his vesture the title of "King of kings and Lord of lords," to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Chap. 19:16.

Unto Him that Loved Us. We have thought that earthly friends loved us, a father, a mother, brothers, and sisters, or bosom friends, but we see that no love is worthy of the name compared with Christ's. And the following sentence adds intensity of meaning to the previous words: "and washed us from our sins in his own blood." What love is this! "Greater love," says the apostle, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But Christ has commended his love to us in that he died for us while we were yet sinners. But more than this—"hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." From being leprous with sin, we are made clean in his sight; from being enemies, we are not only made friends, but raised to positions of honor and dignity. This cleansing, and this kingly and priestly exaltation—to what state do they pertain? to the present or the future? Chiefly to the future; for it is only then that we shall enjoy these blessings in the highest degree. Then, after the atonement has been accomplished, are we absolutely and forever free from our sins; here they are pardoned only on condition, and blotted out only by anticipation. But

when the saints are permitted to sit with Christ on his throne, according to the promise to the victorious Laodiceans, when they take the kingdom under the whole heaven and reign forever and ever, they will be kings in a sense that they never can be in this present state. Yet enough is true of our present condition to make this cheering language appropriate in the Christian's present song of joy; for here we are permitted to say that *we have* redemption through his blood, though that redemption is not yet given, and that *we have* eternal life, though that life is still in the hands of the Son, to be brought unto us at his appearing; and it is still true, as it was in John's and Peter's day, that God designs his people in this world to be unto him a chosen generation, a royal (kingly) priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. 1 Pet. 2 : 9; Rev. 3 : 21; Dan. 7 : 18, 27. No wonder the loving and beloved disciple ascribed to this Being who has done so much for us, glory and dominion, forever and ever. And let all the church join in this most fitting ascription to their greatest benefactor and dearest friend.

VERSE 7. Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

He Cometh with Clouds. Here John carries us forward to the second advent of Christ in glory, the climax and crowning event of his intervention in behalf of this fallen world. Once he came in weakness, now in power; once in humility, now in glory.

He comes in clouds in like manner as he ascended. Acts 1 : 9, 11.

His Coming Visible. "Every eye shall see him;" that is, all who are alive at the time of his coming. We know of no second coming of Christ that shall be as the stillness of midnight, or take place only in the desert or the secret chamber. He comes not as a thief in the sense of stealing in stealthily and quietly upon the world, and purloining goods to which he has no right. But he comes to take to himself his dearest treasure, his sleeping and living saints, whom he has purchased with his own precious blood; whom he has wrested from the power of death in fair and open conflict; and for whom his coming will be no less open and triumphant too. It will be with the brilliancy and splendor of the lightning as it shines from the east to the west. Matt. 24 : 27. It will be with a sound of a trumpet that shall pierce to earth's lowest depths, and with a mighty voice that shall wake the sainted sleepers from their dusty beds. Matt. 24 : 31, margin; 1 Thess. 4 : 16. He will come upon the wicked as a thief, only because they persistently shut their eyes to the tokens of his approach, and will not believe the declarations of his word that he is at the door. To represent two comings, a private and a public, in connection with the second advent, as some do, is a libel upon the Advent name and faith.

And They also which Pierced Him. They also (in addition to the every eye before mentioned) who were chiefly concerned in the tragedy of his death;

they shall behold him returning to earth in triumph and glory. But how is this? They are not living as this dispensation draws to its close; and how, then, shall they behold him? Answer: by a resurrection; for there is no other avenue to life to those who have been once laid in the grave. But how is it that these wicked persons come up at this time? for the general resurrection of the wicked does not take place till a thousand years after the second advent. Chap. 20 : 1–6. On this point, Daniel informs us. He says in chap. 12 : 1, 2 :—

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Here a partial resurrection is brought to view, or a resurrection of a certain class of each, righteous and wicked, before the general resurrection of either class. *Many*, not all, that sleep shall awake. *Some* of the righteous, not all of them, to everlasting life, and *some* of the wicked, not all of them, to shame and everlasting contempt. And this resurrection transpires in connection with the great time of trouble such as never was, which just precedes the coming of the Lord. May not "they also which pierced Him," be among those who then come up to

shame and everlasting contempt? What could be more appropriate, so far as human minds can judge, than that those who took part in the scene of our Lord's greatest humiliation, and other special leaders in crime against him, should be raised to behold his terrible majesty, as he comes forth triumphantly, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his gospel? See Thoughts on Daniel 12 : 2.

The Church's Response. "Even so, Amen." Though this coming of Christ is to the wicked a scene of terror, it is to the righteous a scene of joy. "When the world's distress comes, then the saints' rest comes." That coming which is with flaming fire, and for the purpose of taking vengeance on the wicked, is to recompense rest to all them that believe. 2 Thess. 1 : 6–10. Every friend and lover of Christ will hail every declaration and every token of his return, as glad tidings of great joy.

VERSE 8. **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**

Here another speaker is introduced. Previous to this, John has been the speaker. But this verse has no connection with what precedes, nor with what follows. Who it is who here speaks must be determined, therefore, by the terms used. We have here the expression again, "which is, and which was, and which is to come," which has already been noticed as referring exclusively to God. But it may be asked, Does not the word Lord denote that

it was Christ? On this point, Barnes has the following note: "Many MSS. instead of 'Lord,' κύριος, read 'God,' θεός, and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn, and is now regarded as the correct reading." Bloomfield supplies the word God, and marks the words "the beginning and the ending" as an interpolation. Thus appropriately closes the first principal division of this chapter, by a revelation of the great God of himself, as a being of an eternity of existence, past and future, and of almighty power, and hence able to perform all his threatenings and his promises, which he has given us in this book.

VERSE 9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The subject here changes, John introducing the place and the circumstances under which the Revelation was given. He first sets himself forth as a brother of the universal church, and their companion in the tribulations incident to the Christian profession in this life.

And in the Kingdom. These words have been the occasion of no little controversy. Does John really mean to say that Christians in the present state are in the kingdom of Christ; or, in other words, that Christ's kingdom had already been, in his day, set up? If this language has any reference to the present state, it must be in a very limited and accommodated sense. Those who take the ground

that it has its application here, usually refer to 1 Pet. 2:9, to prove the existence of a kingdom in the present state and to show its nature. But, as was remarked on verse 6, the literal reign of the saints is yet future. It is *through* much tribulation that we are to *enter* into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22. But when the kingdom is entered, the tribulation is done. The tribulation and the kingdom do not exist contemporaneously. Murdock's translation of the Syriac of this verse omits the word kingdom, and reads as follows: "I John, your brother, and partaker with you in the affliction and suffering that are in Jesus the Messiah." Wakefield translates: "I John, your brother, and sharer with you in enduring the affliction of the kingdom of Jesus Christ." Bloomfield says that by the words tribulation and patience, "are denoted afflictions and troubles to be endured for the sake, and in the cause, of Christ: and Βασιλεία [kingdom] intimates that he is to be partaker with them in the kingdom prepared for them." He says that "the best comment on this passage is 2 Tim. 2:12," which reads: "If we suffer, we *shall also* reign with him." From all which, we may safely conclude that though there is a kingdom of grace in the present state, the kingdom to which John alluded is the future kingdom of glory, and the suffering and patience are preparatory to its enjoyment.

The Place. The isle that is called Patmos. A small, barren island, off the west coast of Asia Minor, between the island of Icaria and the promontory of Miletus, where in John's day existed

the nearest Christian church. It is about eight miles in length, one in breadth, and eighteen in circumference. Its present name is Patino or Patmosa. The coast is high, and consists of a succession of capes which form many ports. The only one now in use is a deep bay sheltered by high mountains on every side but one, where it is protected by a projecting cape. The town attached to this port is situated upon a high, rocky mountain rising immediately from the sea, and is the only inhabited site of the island. About half way up the mountain on which this town is built, there is shown a natural grotto in the rock, where tradition will have it that John had his vision and wrote the Revelation. On account of the stern and desolate character of this island, it was used, under the Roman Empire, as a place of banishment, which accounts for the exile of John thither. The banishment of the apostle took place about the year A. D. 94, as is generally supposed, under the Emperor Domitian; and from this fact the date assigned to the writing of the Revelation is A. D. 95 or 96.

The Cause of Banishment. "For the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." This was John's high crime and misdemeanor. The tyrant Domitian who was then invested with the imperial purple of Rome, more eminent for his vices than even for his civil position, quailed before this aged but dauntless apostle. He dared not permit the promulgation of his pure gospel within the bounds of his kingdom. He exiled him to lonely

Patmos, where, if anywhere this side of death, he might be said to be out of the world. Having confined him to that barren spot, and to the cruel labor of the mines, the emperor doubtless thought that this preacher of righteousness was finally disposed of, and that the world would hear no more of him. So, doubtless, thought the persecutors of John Bunyan when they had shut him up in Bedford jail. But when man thinks he has buried the truth in eternal oblivion, the Lord gives it a resurrection in tenfold glory and power. From Bunyan's dark and narrow cell there blazed forth a spiritual light, which, next to the Bible itself, has built up the interests of the gospel; and from the barren isle of Patmos, where Domitian thought he had forever extinguished at least one torch of truth, there arose the most magnificent revelation of all the sacred canon, to shed its divine luster over the whole Christian world till the end of time. And how many will revere the name of the beloved disciple, and hang with delight upon his rapturous visions of heavenly glory, who will never learn the name of the monster who caused his banishment. Verily, those words of the Scriptures are sometimes applicable, even to the present life, which declare that "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance," but "the name of the wicked shall rot."

VERSE 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

In the Spirit. Exiled though John was, from all of like faith, and almost from the world, he was not

exiled from God, nor from Christ, nor from the Holy Spirit, nor from angels. He still had communion with his divine Lord. And the expression, "in the Spirit," seems to denote the highest state of spiritual elevation into which a person can be brought by the Spirit of God. It marked the commencement of his vision.

On the Lord's Day. What day is intended by this designation? On this question four different positions are taken by different classes. 1. That it means the gospel dispensation. 2. That it means the day of Judgment, the future "day of the Lord" so often brought to view in the Scriptures. 3. That it means the first day of the week; and 4. That it means the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord.

To the first of these positions it is sufficient to reply that the book of Revelation is dated by the writer John, in the isle of Patmos, and upon the Lord's day. The writer, the place where it was written, and the day upon which it was dated, have each a real existence, and not merely a symbolical or mystical one. But if we say that the day means the gospel dispensation, we give it a symbolical or mystical meaning, which is not admissible. Besides, this position involves the absurdity of making John say, sixty-five years after the death of Christ, that the vision which he records was seen by him in the gospel dispensation, as though any Christian could possibly be ignorant of that fact!

The second position, that it is the day of Judgment, cannot be correct; for while John might have

had a vision *concerning* the day of Judgment, he could not have had one *on* that day when it was yet future. The word translated "on" is *en* (ἐν), and is defined by Robinson, when relating to time, as follows: "Time *when*, a definite point or period, *in*, *during*, *on*, *at*, which anything takes place." It never means about or concerning. Hence they who refer it to the Judgment day, either contradict the language used, making it mean "concerning" instead of "on," or they make John state, if we may coin a word, a most distortionate falsehood by saying that he had a vision upon the isle of Patmos, over seventeen hundred years ago, *on* the day of Judgment, which is yet future!

For the third view, that by "Lord's day" is meant the first day of the week, a view by far the most generally entertained, we inquire for the proof. What evidence have we for this assertion? The text itself does not define the term Lord's day; hence if it means the first day of the week we must look elsewhere in the Bible for the proof that that day of the week is ever so designated. The only other inspired writers that speak of the first day at all, are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul; and they speak of it simply as the first day of the week. They never speak of it in a manner to distinguish it above any other of the six working days. And this is the more remarkable, viewed from the popular standpoint, as three of them speak of it at the very time when it is said to have become the Lord's day by the resurrection of the Lord upon it, and

two of them mention it some thirty years after that event.

But it is said that the term "Lord's day" was the usual term for the first day of the week in John's day. Where is the proof of this? It cannot be found. But we have proof of just the contrary. See "History of the Sabbath," and "Complete Testimony of the Fathers," by Andrews, published at the REVIEW Office, Battle Creek, Mich. If this was the universal designation of the first day at the time the Revelation was written, the same writer would most assuredly call it so in all his subsequent writings. But John wrote his gospel *after* he wrote the Revelation, and yet in that gospel he calls the first day of the week, not Lord's day, but simply "first day of the week." For proof that the gospel was written at a period subsequent to the Revelation, the reader is referred to the following authorities: Religious Encyclopedia, Barnes' Notes (gospels), Bib. Dic., Cottage Bible, Domestic Bible, Mine Explored, Union Bib. Dic., Comprehensive Bible, Paragraph Bible, Bloomfield, Dr. Hales, Horne, Nevins, and Olshausen.

And what still further disproves the claim here set up in behalf of the first day, is the fact that neither the Father nor the Son have ever claimed the first day as their own in any higher sense than they have each or any of the other laboring days. They have never placed any blessing upon it, nor attached any sanctity to it. If it was to be called the Lord's day from the fact of Christ's resurrec-

tion upon it, Inspiration would doubtless have somewhere so informed us. But there are other events equally essential to the plan of salvation, as for instance, the crucifixion and the ascension; and in the absence of all instruction upon the point, why not call the day upon which either of these occurred, the Lord's day, as well as the day upon which he rose from the dead?

The three positions already examined having been disproved, the fourth now demands attention, namely, that by Lord's day is meant the Sabbath of the Lord. And this of itself is susceptible of the clearest proof: 1. When God gave to man in the beginning six days of the week for labor, he expressly reserved the seventh day to himself, placed his blessing upon it, and claimed it as his holy day. 2. Moses told Israel in the wilderness of Sin, on the sixth day of the week, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." We come to Sinai where the great Lawgiver proclaimed his moral precepts in awful grandeur; and in that supreme code, he thus lays claim to his hallowed day: "The seventh day is the Sabbath *of the Lord thy God;* . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." By the prophet Isaiah, about eight hundred years later, God spoke as follows: "If thou turn away thy foot from *the Sabbath,* from doing thy pleasure on MY HOLY DAY, ... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,"

etc. We come down to New-Testament times, and He who is one with the Father, declares expressly, "The Son of man is *Lord* also of the Sabbath." Can any man deny that that day is the *Lord's day*, of which he has emphatically declared that he is the *Lord?* Thus we see that whether it be the Father or the Son whose title is involved, no other day can be called the Lord's day but the Sabbath of the great Creator.

One more thought, and we leave this point: There is in this dispensation one day distinguished above the other days of the week as the Lord's day. How completely does this great fact disprove the claim put forth by some that there is no Sabbath in this dispensation, but that all days are alike. And by calling it the Lord's day, the apostle has given us, near the close of the first century, apostolic sanction for the observance of the only day which can be called the Lord's day, which is the seventh day of the week.

Verse 11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

On this verse Dr. A. Clarke remarks, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and]—This whole clause is wanting in A B C; thirty-one others; some editions; the Syriac, Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Arethas, Andreas, and Primasius. Griesbach has left it out of the text."

He also states that the phrase "in Asia," is wanting in the principal MSS. and versions, and that Griesbach has left it out of the text. Bloomfield also marks the clause, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and"—as without doubt an interpolation, and also the words "in Asia." It would then read, "Saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches; unto Ephesus," etc. See translations of Whiting, Wesley, American Bible Union and others. Compare remarks on verse 4.

VERSES 12–18. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

I Turned to See the Voice; that is, the person from whom the voice came.

Seven Golden Candlesticks. These cannot be the antitype of the golden candlestick of the ancient typical temple service; for that was but *one* candlestick

with seven branches. That is ever spoken of in the singular number. But here are *seven*, more properly lamp-stands than simply candlesticks; stands upon which lamps are set to give light in the room. And they bear no resemblance to the ancient candlestick, but are distinct, and so far separated from each other that the Son of Man is seen walking about in the midst of them.

The Son of Man. The central and all-attractive figure of the scene now opened before John's vision, is the majestic form of one like the Son of man, representing Christ. The description here given of him with his flowing robe, his hair white, not with age, but with the brightness of heavenly glory, his flaming eyes, his feet glowing like molten brass, and his voice as the sound of many waters, cannot be excelled for grandeur and sublimity. Overcome by the presence of this august Being, and perhaps under a vivid sense of his own unworthiness, John fell at his feet as dead; but a comforting hand is laid upon him, and a voice of sweet assurance tells him to fear not. It is equally the privilege of Christians to-day to feel the same hand laid upon them to strengthen and comfort in hours of trial and affliction, and to hear the same voice saying unto them, Fear not.

But the most cheering assurance in all these words of consolation, is the declaration of this Exalted One who is alive forevermore, that he is the arbiter of death and the grave. "I have," he says, "the keys of hell [ἅδης, the grave] and death." Death is a conquered tyrant. He may ply his gloomy labors age

after age, of gathering to the grave the precious of the earth, and gloat for a season over his apparent triumph. But he is performing a fruitless task; for the key to his dark prison-house has been wrenched from his grasp, and now rests in the hands of a mightier than he. He is compelled to deposit his trophies in a region over which another has absolute control; and this one is the unchanging friend and the pledged redeemer of his people. Then grieve not for the righteous dead; they are in safe keeping. An enemy for a while takes them away; but a friend holds the key to the place of their temporary confinement.

VERSE 19. Write the things which thou has seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

A more definite command is given in this verse to John to write the entire Revelation, which would relate chiefly to things which were then in the future. In some few instances, events then in the past or then transpiring were referred to; but these references were simply for the purpose of introducing events to be fulfilled after that time, and so that no link in the chain might be lacking.

VERSE 20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

To represent the Son of man as holding in his hand only the ministers of seven literal churches in Asia

Minor, and walking in the midst of only those seven churches, would be to reduce the sublime representations and declarations of this and following chapters into comparative insignificance. The providential care and presence of the Lord are with, not a specified number of churches only, but with all his people; not in the days of John merely, but through all time. "Lo! I am with you alway," said he to his disciples, "even unto the end of the world." See remarks on verse 4.

Chapter II.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Verse 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3. and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. 4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Church of Ephesus. Some reasons why the seven churches, or more properly the messages to them, should be regarded as prophetic, having their application to the seven periods of the Christian age, have been given in the remarks on chap. 1 : 4. It may here be added that this view is neither new nor local. Benson quotes Bishop Newton as saying:—

"Many contend, and among them such learned men as More and Vitringa, that the seven epistles are prophetical of so many successive periods and states of the church, from the beginning to the conclusion of all."

Scott says, "Many expositors have imagined that these epistles to the seven churches were mystical prophecies of seven distinct periods, into which the whole term, from the apostles' days to the end of the world, would be divided."

Although neither Newton nor Scott themselves hold this view, their testimony is good as showing that such has been the view of *many expositors*. Matthew Henry says:—

"An opinion has been held by some commentators of note, which may be given in the words of Vitringa: 'That under this emblematical representation of the seven churches of Asia, the Holy Spirit has delineated seven different states of the Christian church, which would appear in succession, extending to the coming of our Lord, and the consummation of all things. That this is given in descriptions taken from the names, states, and conditions of these churches, so that they might behold themselves, and learn both their good qualities and their defects, and what admonitions and exhortations were suitable for them.' Vitringa has given a summary of the arguments which may be alleged in favor of this interpretation. Some of them are ingenious, but they are not now considered sufficient to support such a theory. Gill is one of the principal of the English commentators who adopt this

view, that 'they are prophetical of the churches of Christ, in the several periods of time, until he appears again.'"

It appears from the authors above cited, that what has led commentators of more modern times to discard the view of the prophetical nature of the messages to the seven churches, is the comparatively recent, and unscriptural doctrine of the temporal millennium. The last state of the church as described in chap. 3 : 15–17, was deemed to be incompatible with the glorious state of things which would exist here on this earth for a thousand years, with all the world converted to God. Hence, in this case, as in many others, the more scriptural view is made to yield to the more pleasing. The hearts of men, as in ancient times, still love smooth things; and their ears are ever favorably open to those who will prophesy peace.

The definition of the word Ephesus is, *desirable*, which may well be taken as a good descriptive term of the character and condition of the church in its first state. Those early Christians had received the doctrine of Christ in its purity. They enjoyed the benefits and blessings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were noted for works, labor, and patience. In faithfulness to the pure principles taught by Christ, they could not bear those that were evil, and they tried false apostles, searched out their true characters, and found them liars. That this work was done by the literal and particular church at Ephesus, we have no evidence;

there is nothing said about it by Paul in the epistle he wrote to that church; but it was done by the Christian church as a whole, in that age, and was a most appropriate work at that time. See Acts 15; 2 Cor. 11:13.

The Angel of the Church. The angel of a church must denote the messenger or minister of that church; and as these churches each cover a period of time, the angel of each church must denote the *ministry*, or all the true ministers of Christ during the period covered by that church. The different messages, though addressed to the ministers, cannot be understood to be applicable to them alone; but they are doubtless addressed to the church through them.

The Cause of Complaint. "I have somewhat against thee," says Christ, "because thou hast left thy first love." "Not less worthy of warning than departure from fundamental doctrine, or from scriptural morality, is the leaving of first love. The charge here is not that of falling from grace, nor that love is extinguished, but diminished. No zeal, no suffering, can atone for the want of first love."—*Thompson.* The time never should come in a Christian's experience, when, if he was asked to mention the period of his greatest love to Christ, he would not say, The present moment. But if such a time does come, then should he remember from whence he is fallen, meditate upon it, take time for it, and carefully call up the state of his former acceptance with God, then haste to repent, and retrace his

steps to that desirable position. Love, like faith, is manifested by works; and first love, when it is attained, will always bring first works.

The Threatening. "I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The coming here mentioned must be a figurative coming, signifying a visitation of judgment, inasmuch as it is conditional. The removing of the candlestick would denote the taking away from them the light and privileges of the gospel, and committing them to other hands, unless they should better fulfill the responsibilities of the trust committed to them. But it may be asked, on the view that these messages are prophetic, if the candlestick would not be removed any way, whether they repented or not, as that church was succeeded by the next, to occupy the next period? and if this is not an objection against regarding these churches as prophetic? Answer: The expiration of the period covered by any church is not the removal of the candlestick of that church. The removal of their candlestick would be taking away from them privileges which they might, and should, longer enjoy. It would be the rejection of them on the part of Christ, as his representatives, to bear the light of his truth and gospel before the world. And this threatening would be just as applicable to individuals as to the church as a body. How many who professed Christianity during that period, thus came short and were rejected, we know not; doubtless many. And thus things would go on, some

remaining steadfast, some backsliding, and becoming no longer light-bearers in the world, new converts meanwhile filling up the vacancies made by death and apostasy, until the church reaches a new era in her experience, marked off as another period in her history, and covered by another message.

The Nicolaitanes. How ready is Christ to commend his people for whatever good qualities they may possess! If there is anything of which he approves, he mentions that first. And in this message to the church of Ephesus, having first mentioned their commendable traits, and then their failures, as if unwilling to pass by any of their good qualities, he mentions this: that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which he also hated. In verse 15, the doctrines of the same characters are condemned. It appears that they were a class of persons whose deeds and dectrines were alike abominable in the the sight of Heaven. Their origin is involved in some doubt. Some say that they sprang from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons; Acts 6:5; some, that they only attribute their origin to him to gain the prestige of his name; and others, that the sect took its name from one Nicolas of a later date, which is probably the nearest correct. Concerning their doctrines and practices, there seems to be a general agreement that they held to a community of wives, regarded adultery and fornication as things indifferent, and permitted the eating of things offered to idols. See Rel. Encyc., Clarke, Kitto, and other authorities.

The Summons to Attention. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." A solemn manner of calling universal attention to that which is of general and most momentous importance. The same language is used to each of the seven churches. Christ, when upon earth, made use of the same form of speech in calling the attention of the people to the most important of his teachings. He used it in reference to the mission of John, Matt. 11:15, the parable of the sower, Matt. 13:9, and the parable of the tares, setting forth the end of the world, verse 43. It is also used in relation to an important prophetic fulfillment in Rev. 13:9.

The Promise to the Victor. To the overcomer it is promised that he shall eat of the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise, or garden, of God. Where is this paradise? Answer. In the third Heaven. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 12:2, that he knew a man, referring to himself, caught up to the third Heaven. In verse 4, he calls the same place paradise; leaving only one conclusion to be drawn, which is, that paradise is in the third Heaven. In this paradise, it seems, is the tree of life. There is but one tree of life brought to view in the Bible. It is mentioned six times, three times in Genesis, and three times in the Revelation; but it is used every time with the definite article *the*. It is *the* tree of life in the first book of the Bible, *the* tree of life in the last; *the* tree of life in the "paradise" (Septuagint) in Eden at the beginning, and *the* tree of life in the paradise

of which John now speaks, in Heaven above. But if there is but one tree, and that was at first upon the earth, it may be asked how it has now come to be in Heaven? To which the answer would be that it must have been taken up, or translated to the paradise above. There is no possible way that the same identical body which is situated in one place can be located in another but by being transported bodily thither. And that the tree of life and paradise have been removed from earth to Heaven, besides the necessary inference from this argument, there is good reason to believe.

In 2 Esdras 7 : 26, occurs this language: "Behold, the time shall come, that these tokens which I have told thee shall come to pass, and the *bride* shall appear, and she coming forth shall be seen that *now is withdrawn from the earth.*" There is an evident allusion here to "the bride, the Lamb's wife," Rev. 21 : 9, which is the "holy city, New Jerusalem," verse 10, Gal. 4 : 26, in which is the tree of life, Rev. 22 : 2, which is now "withdrawn from the earth," but which will, in due time, appear and be located among men. Rev. 21 : 2, 3.

The following paragraph on this point, we quote from Kurtz' Sacred History, p. 50 :—

"The act of God in appointing the cherubim 'to keep the way of the tree of life,' Gen. 3 : 24, in the garden of Eden, likewise appears not only in an aspect indicating judicial severity, but also in one which conveys a promise full of consolation. The blessed abode from which man is expelled, is neither

annihilated nor even abandoned to desolation and ruin, but withdrawn from the earth and from man, and consigned to the care of the most perfect creatures of God, in order that it may be ultimately restored to man when he is redeemed. Rev. 22:2. The garden, as it existed before God 'planted' or adorned it, came under the curse, like the remainder of the earth, but the celestial and paradistical addition was exempted, and intrusted to the cherubim. The true paradise is now translated to the invisible world. At least a symbolical copy of it, established in the holy of holies in the tabernacle, was granted to the people of Israel, after the pattern which Moses saw in the mount, Ex. 25:9, 40, and the original itself, as the renewed habitation of redeemed man, will hereafter descend to the earth. Rev. 21:10."

To the overcomer, then, is promised a restoration to more than Adam lost; not to the overcomers of that state of the church, merely, but to all overcomers of every age; for in the great rewards of Heaven there are no restrictions. Reader, strive to be an overcomer; for he who gains access to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, shall die no more.

Time of the first church, to the close of the first century, or to the death of the last of the apostles.

VERSE 8. **And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich); and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10. Fear none of those things which**

thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

It will be noticed that the Lord introduces himself to each church by mentioning some of his characteristics which show him to be peculiarly fitted to bear to them the testimony which he utters. To the Smyrnian church, about to pass through the fiery ordeal of persecution, he reveals himself as one who was dead, but is now alive. If they should be called to seal their testimony with their blood, they were to remember that the eyes of One were upon them, who had shared the same fate, but had triumphed over death, and was able to bring them up again from a martyr's grave.

Poverty and Riches. "I know thy poverty," says Christ to them, "but thou art rich." Strange paradox, this may seem at first. But who are the truly rich in this world? Those who are "rich in faith" and "heirs of the kingdom." The wealth of this world, for which men so eagerly strive, and so often barter away present happiness and future endless life, is "coin not current in Heaven." A certain writer has forcibly remarked, "There is many a rich poor man, and many a poor rich man."

Say They Are Jews and Are Not. That the term Jew is not here used in a literal sense, is very evident. It denotes some character which was approved by the gospel standard. Paul's language will make

this point plain. He says, Rom. 2:28, 29: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew [in the true Christian sense] which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Again he says, chap. 9:6, 7: "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children." In Gal. 3:28, 29, Paul further tells us that in Christ there are no such outward distinctions as Jew and Greek, but that if we are Christ's then are we *Abraham's seed* [in the true sense], and *heirs* according to the promise. To say, as some do, that the term Jew is never applied to Christians, is to contradict all these inspired declarations of Paul, and the testimony of the faithful and true Witness to the Smyrnian church. Some were hypocritically pretending to be Jews in this Christian sense, when they possessed nothing of the requisite character. Such were of the synagogue of Satan.

Tribulation Ten Days. As this message is prophetic, the time mentioned in it must also be regarded as prophetic, which would denote ten years. And it is a noticeable fact that the last and most bloody of the ten persecutions continued just ten years under Diocletian, from A. D. 302 to A. D. 312. See Buck's Theol. Dic., pp. 332, 333. It would be difficult to make an application of this language on the ground that these messages are not prophetic; for in that case, only ten literal days could be

meant; and it would not seem probable that a persecution of only ten days, on only a single church, would be made a matter of prophecy. Again, apply this persecution to any of the notable persecutions of that period, and how could it be spoken of as the fate of one church alone? All the churches suffered in them; and where, then, would be the propriety of singling out one, to the exclusion of the rest, as alone involved in such a calamity?

Faithful unto Death. Some have endeavored to base a criticism on the use of the word *unto*, instead of until, as though the idea of time was not involved. But the original word, ἄχρι, rendered unto, signifies, primarily, until. No argument, however, can be drawn from this for consciousness in death. The vital point for such an argument is still lacking; for it is not affirmed that the crown of life is bestowed immediately at death. We must consequently look to other scriptures to learn when the crown of life is given; and other scriptures very fully inform us. Paul declares that this crown is to be given at the day of Christ's appearing, 2 Tim. 4:8 at the last trump, 1 Cor. 15:51–54 when the Lord shall himself descend from Heaven, 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, says Peter, 1 Pet. 5:4; at the resurrection of the just, says Christ, Luke 14:14 and when he should return to take his people to the mansions prepared for them, that they might ever be with him. John 14:3. Be thou faithful until death; and having been thus faithful, when the time comes that the saints of God are rewarded, you shall receive a crown of life.

The Overcomer's Reward. "He shall not be hurt of the second death." Is not the language Christ here uses a good comment upon what he taught his disciples, when he said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"? Matt. 10:28. The Smyrnians might be put to death here; but the future life, which was to be given them, man *could* not take away, and God *would* not; hence they were to fear not those who could kill the body,—to "fear none of the things which they should suffer;" for their eternal existence was sure.

Smyrna signifies *myrrh*—fit appellation for the church of God, while passing through the fiery furnace of persecution, and proving herself a "sweet-smelling savor unto him." But we soon reach the days of Constantine, when the church presents a new phase, rendering a far different name and another message applicable to her history.

According to the foregoing, the date of the Smyrnian church would be A. D. 200–323.

VERSE 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write: These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges: 13: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrified

unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Against the church of Smyrna, which has just been considered, there was no word of condemnation uttered. Persecution is ever calculated to keep the church pure, and incite its members to piety and godliness. But we now reach a period when influences began to work, through which errors and evils were likely to creep into the church.

Pergamos signifies *height, elevation.* The period covered by this church may be located from the days of Constantine, or perhaps rather from his professed conversion to Christianity, A. D. 323, to the establishment of the papacy, A. D. 538. It was a period in which the true servants of God had to struggle against a spirit of worldly policy, pride, and popularity, among those who professed to be the followers of Christ, and against the virulent workings of the mystery of iniquity, which finally resulted in the full development of the papal man of sin.

Where Satan's Seat Is. Christ takes cognizance of the unfavorable situation of his people during this period. This language is not probably designed to denote locality. As to place, Satan is everywhere

where Christians dwell. But there are times and seasons when he works with special power; and the period covered by the church of Pergamos was one of these. During this period, the doctrine of Christ was being corrupted, the mystery of iniquity was working, and Satan was laying the very foundation of that most stupendous system of wickedness,—the papacy. Here was the falling away foretold by Paul in 2 Thess. 2 : 3.

Antipas. That a class of persons are referred to by this name, and not an individual, there is good reason to believe; for no authentic information respecting such an individual is now to be found. On this point, Wm. Miller says:—

"It is supposed that Antipas was not an individual, but a class of men who opposed the power of the bishops, or popes, in that day, being a combination of two words, *anti*, opposed, and *Papas*, father, or pope, and many of them suffered martyrdom, at that time, in Constantinople and Rome, where the bishops and popes began to exercise the power which soon after brought into subjection the kings of the earth, and trampled on the rights of the church of Christ. And for myself, I see no reason to reject this explanation of the word *Antipas* in this text, as the history of those times is perfectly silent respecting such an individual as is here named."—*Miller's Lectures*, pp. 138, 139.

Watson says, "Ancient ecclesiastical history furnishes no account of this Antipas." Dr. Clark mentions a work as extant called the "Acts of Antipas,"

but gives us to understand that it is entitled to no credit.

The Cause of Censure. Disadvantages in situation are no excuse for wrongs in the church. Although this church lived at a time when Satan was especially at work, it was their duty to keep themselves pure from the leaven of his evil doctrines. Hence, they were censured for harboring in their midst those who held the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. See remarks on the Nicolaitanes, verse 6. What the doctrine of Balaam was, is here partially revealed. He taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. See a full account of his transactions and their results, in Num. 22–25, and 31 : 13–16. It appears that Balaam desired to curse Israel for the sake of the rich reward which Balak offered him for so doing. But not being permitted by the Lord to curse them, he resolved to accomplish essentially the same thing, though in a different way. He therefore counseled Balak to seduce them, by means of the females of Moab, to participate in the celebration of the rites of idolatry, and all its licentious accompaniments. The plan succeeded. The abominations of idolatry spread through the camp of Israel, the curse of God was called down upon them by their sins, and there fell by the plague twenty-four thousand persons.

The doctrines complained of in the church of Pergamos were of course similar in their tendency, leading to spiritual idolatry, and an unlawful con-

nection between the church and the world. Out of this spirit was finally produced the union of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, which culminated in the formation of the papacy.

Repent. By disciplining or expelling those who hold these pernicious doctrines. If they did not do this, Christ declared that he would take the matter into his own hands, and come unto them (in judgment) and fight against them (them who held these evil doctrines); and the whole church would be held responsible for the wrongs of those heretical ones whom they harbored in their midst.

The Promise. To the overcomer it is promised that he shall eat of the hidden manna, and receive from his approving Lord a white stone, with a new and precious name engraved thereon. Concerning manna that is "hidden," and a new name that no one is to know but he that receiveth it, not much in the way of exposition should be required. But there has been much conjecture upon these points, and an allusion to these may be expected. Most commentators apply the manna, white stone, and a new name, to spiritual blessings to be enjoyed in this life; but, like all the other promises to the overcomer, we think it refers wholly to the future, and is to be given when the time comes that the saints are to be rewarded. Perhaps the following from the late H. Blunt, is as satisfactory as anything that has ever been written upon these several particulars:—

"It is generally thought by commentators that

this refers to an ancient judicial custom of dropping a black stone into an urn when it is intended to condemn, and a white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, 'I will give thee a white stone,' that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers rather to a custom of a very different kind, and not unknown to the classical reader; according with beautiful propriety to the case before us. In primitive times, when traveling was rendered difficult from want of places of public entertainment, hospitality was exercised by private individuals to a very great extent, of which, indeed, we find frequent traces in all history, and in none more than the Old Testament. Persons who partook of this hospitality, and those who practiced it, frequently contracted habits of friendship and regard for each other, and it became a well-established custom among the Greeks and Romans to provide their guests with some particular mark, which was handed down from father to son, and insured hospitality and kind treatment whenever it was presented. This mark was usually a small stone or pebble, cut in half, and upon the halves of which the host and the guest mutually inscribed their names, and then interchanged with each other. The production of this tessera was quite sufficient to insure friendship for themselves or descendants whenever they traveled again in the same direction; while it is evident that these stones required to be privately kept, and the names written upon

them carefully concealed, lest others should obtain the privileges instead of the persons for whom they were intended.

"How natural, then, the allusion to this custom in the words of the text, 'I will give him to eat of the hidden manna!' and having done this, having made him partake of my hospitality, having recognized him as my guest and friend, I will present him with the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he who receiveth it. I will give him a pledge of my friendship, sacred and inviolable, known only to himself."

On the new name, Wesley very appropriately says:—

"Jacob, after his victory, gained the new name of Israel. Wouldst thou know what thy new name will be? The way to this is plain,—overcome. Till then, all thy inquiries are vain. Thou wilt then read it on the white stone."

VERSE 18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. 22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23. And I will kill

her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden. 25. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. 26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father. 28. And I will give him the morning star. 29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If the period covered by the Pergamos church has been correctly located, terminating with the setting up of the papacy, A. D. 538, the most natural division to be assigned to the church of Thyatira would be the time of the continuance of this blasphemous power through the 1260 years of its supremacy; or, from A. D. 538, to A. D. 1798.

Thyatira signifies, "sweet savor of labor," or "sacrifice of contrition." This would well describe the state of the church of Jesus Christ during the long period of papal triumph and persecution. This age of dreadful tribulation upon the church such as never was (Matt. 24:21), improved the real condition of believers. Hence, they receive for their works, charity, service, faith and patience, the commendation of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. And works are then again mentioned, as though worthy of a double commendation. And the last were more than the first. There had been

an improvement in their condition, a growth in grace, an increase in all these elements of Christianity. This church is the only one that is commended for an improvement in spiritual things. But, as in the church of Pergamos, unfavorable circumstances were no apology for false doctrines in the church, so in this church, no amount of labor, charity, service, faith or patience, could compensate for a like sin. A rebuke is therefore given them for suffering in their midst—

That Woman Jezebel. As in the preceding church, Antipas denoted, not an individual, but a class of persons; so, doubtless, Jezebel is here to be understood in the same sense. Watson's Bible Dictionary says, "The name of Jezebel is used proverbially. Rev. 2 : 20." Wm. Miller, Lectures, p. 142, speaks as follows:—

"Jezebel is a figurative name alluding to Ahab's wife, who slew the prophets of the Lord, led her husband into idolatry, and fed the prophets of Baal at her own table. A more striking figure could not have been used to denote the papal abominations. See 1 Kings, chaps. 18, 19, and 21. It is very evident from history, as well as from this verse, that the church of Christ did suffer some of the papal monks to preach and teach among them. See the 'History of the Waldenses.'"

The Comprehensive Commentary has the following remark upon verse 23: "Children are spoken of, which confirms the idea that a sect and its proselytes are meant." The judgments here threatened

against this woman are in harmony with the threatenings in other parts of this book against the Romish church, under the symbol of a corrupt woman, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. See chaps. 17–19. The death which is threatened is doubtless the second death, at the end of the one thousand years of Rev. 20, when the righteous retribution from the Searcher of "the reins and hearts" of all men will be given. And further, the declaration, "I will give unto every one of you according to your works," is proof that the address to this church looks forward prophetically to the final reward or punishment of all accountable beings.

And all the Churches Shall Know, etc. It has been argued from this expression that these churches could not denote seven *successive* periods of the gospel age, but must exist contemporaneously, as otherwise *all* the churches could not know that Christ was the searcher of the reins and hearts from seeing his judgments upon Jezebel and her children. But when is it that all the churches are to know this? It is when these children are punished with death. And if this is at the time when the second death is inflicted upon all the wicked, then, indeed, will "all the churches" as they behold the infliction of the Judgment, know that no secret thing, no evil thought or purpose of the heart, has escaped the knowledge of Him who, with eyes like flames of fire, searches the hearts and reins of men.

I Will Lay upon You none other Burden. A

respite promised the church, if we rightly apprehend, from the burden so long her portion,—the weight of papal oppression. It cannot be applied to the reception of new truths; for truth is not a burden to any accountable being. But the days of tribulation that came upon that church, were to be shortened for the elect's sake. Matt. 24: 22. "They shall be holpen," says the prophet, "with a little help." Dan. 11: 34. "And the earth helped the woman," says John. Rev. 12: 6.

Hold Fast till I Come. These are the words of "the Son of God," and bring to our view an unconditional coming. To the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos, certain comings were threatened on conditions: "Repent, or *else* I will come unto thee," etc., implying visitations of judgment. But here, a coming of altogether a different nature is brought to view. It is not a threatening of punishment. It is suspended upon no conditions. It is set before the believer as a matter of hope, and can refer to no other event but the future second advent of the Lord in glory, when the Christian's trials will cease, and his efforts in the race for life, and his warfare for a crown of righteousness, be rewarded with everlasting success.

This church brings us down to the time when the more immediate signs of the soon coming advent began to be fulfilled. In 1780, eighteen years before the close of this period, the predicted signs in the sun and moon were fulfilled. See on chap. 6: 12. And in reference to these signs, the Saviour

said: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." In the history of this church we reach a point within eighty-two years of the present time (1880), and must conclude that some whose religious experience commenced back under that period, will live to behold the Lord appear to consummate the hope of his people. To such, the exhortation is, "Hold fast till I come."

Till the End. The end of the Christian age. "He that shall endure to the end," says Christ, "the same shall be saved." Matt. 24:13. Is not here a like promise to those who keep Christ's works, do the things he has enjoined,—keep the faith of Jesus? Chap. 14:12.

Power over the Nations. In this world, the wicked bear rule, and the servants of Christ are of no esteem. But the time is coming when righteousness will be in the ascendency; when all ungodliness will be seen in its true light, and be at a heavy discount; and when the scepter of power will be in the hands of the people of God. This promise will be explained by the following facts and scriptures: 1. The nations are to be given by the Father into the hands of Christ, to be ruled with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Ps. 2:8, 9. 2. Associated with Christ when he thus enters upon his own work of power and judgment, are to be his saints. Rev. 3:21. 3. They are to reign with him in this capacity for one thousand years. Chap. 20:4. 4. During this

period, the degree of judgment upon wicked men and evil angels is determined. 1 Cor. 6 : 2, 3. 5. At the end of the one thousand years, they have the honor of sharing with Christ in the execution of the sentence written. Ps. 149 : 9.

The Morning Star. Christ says in chap. 22 : 16, that he is himself the morning star. The morning star is the immediate forerunner of the day. What is here called the morning star, is called the day-star, in 2 Pet. 1 : 19, where it is associated with the dawn of the day. "Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise." During the saint's weary night of watching, they have the word of God to shed its needful light upon their path. But when the day-star shall arise in their hearts, or the morning star be given to the overcomers, they will be taken into so close a relation to Christ that their hearts will be fully illuminated with his Spirit, and they will walk in his light. Then they will no longer need the sure word of prophecy, which now shines as a light in a dark place. Hastên on, O glorious hour! when the light of Heaven's bright day shall rise upon the pathway of the little flock, and beams of glory from the eternal world shall gild their banners.

Chapter III.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES CONTINUED.

VERSE 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If the preceding churches have been correctly applied, the period covered by the church of Sardis, must commence about the year 1798.

Sardis signifies, "prince or song of joy; or, that which remains." We then have before us, as constituting this church, the reformed churches from the date above-named to the great movement which marked another era in the history of the people of God.

The great fault found with this church is, that it has a name to live, but is dead. And what a high position, in a worldly point of view, has the nominal church occupied during this period! Look at her high-sounding titles, and her favor with the world. But how has pride and popularity grown apace, until spirituality is destroyed, the line of distinction between the church and the world is obliterated, and these different popular bodies are churches of Christ only in name.

This church was to hear the proclamation of the doctrine of the second advent, as we learn from verse 3: "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." This implies that the doctrine of the advent would be proclaimed, and the duty of watching enjoined upon the church. The coming is unconditional; the manner only in which it would come upon them is conditional. Their not watching would not prevent the coming of the Lord; but by watching they could avoid being overtaken as a thief. It is only to those who are in this condition that the day of the Lord comes unawares. "Ye, brethren," says Paul, "are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5 : 4.

A Few Names even in Sardis. This language would seem to imply a period of unparalleled worldliness in the church. But even in this state of things, there are some whose garments are not defiled, some who have kept themselves free from this contaminating influence. James says, "*Pure* religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit

the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted from the world.*" James 1 : 27.

Shall Walk with Me in White. The Lord does not overlook his people in any place, however few their numbers. Lonely Christian, with none of like precious faith with whom to commune, do you ever feel as though the hosts of the unbelievers would swallow you up? You are not unnoticed or forgotten by your Lord. The multitude of the wicked around you cannot be so great as to hide you from his view. And if you keep yourself unspotted from surrounding evil, the promise is sure to you. You shall be clothed in white, the white raiment of the overcomer, and walk with your Lord in glory. See chap. 7 : 17 : "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

White Raiment. Being clothed with white raiment is explained in other scriptures to be a symbol of exchanging iniquity for righteousness. See Zech. 3 : 4, 5. "Take away the filthy garments from him," explained by the language that follows, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." "The fine linen," or the white raiment, "is the righteousness of saints." Rev. 19 : 8.

The Book of Life. Object of thrilling interest! Vast and ponderous volume, in which are enrolled the names of all the candidates for everlasting life! And is there danger, after having our names once

entered in that heavenly journal, of having them blotted out? Yes; or this warning would never have been penned. Paul, even, feared that he himself might become a castaway. 1 Cor. 9 : 27. It is only by our being overcomers at last that our names can be retained in that book. But all will not overcome. Their names, of course, will be blotted out. And reference is made to some definite point of time in the future for this work. "I *will not*," says Christ, in the future, blot out the names of the overcomers, which is also saying, by implication, that at the same time he *will* blot out the names of those who do not overcome. Is not this the same time mentioned by Peter, in Acts 3 : 19 : "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your *sins* may be *blotted out*, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"? To say to the overcomer that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life, is to say also that his sins shall be blotted out of the book wherein they are recorded, to be remembered against him no more forever. Heb. 8 : 12. And this is to be when the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord; may we not also add, in that other language of Peter, when the day-star shall arise in our hearts, or the morning star be given to the church, just previous to the advent of the Lord to usher in the glorious day? 2 Pet. 1 : 19; Rev. 2 : 28. And when that hour of decision shall come, which cannot now be a great way in the future, how, reader, will it be with you? Will your sins be blotted out, and your name retained in the book of life? or will

your name be blotted out of the book of life, and your sins left to bear their fearful record against you?

The Presentation in Glory. "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Christ taught here upon earth, that as men confessed or denied, despised or honored, him here, they would be confessed or denied by him before his Father in Heaven and the holy angels. Matt. 10 : 32, 33; Mark 8 : 38; Luke 12 : 8, 9. And who can fathom the honor of being approved before the heavenly hosts? Who can conceive the bliss of that moment when we shall be owned by the Lord of life before his Father, as those who have done his will, fought the good fight, run the race, honored him before men, overcome, and whose names are worthy, through his merits, of standing upon the imperishable record of the book of life forever and ever!

VERSE 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, 8, I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of

my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. 13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Philadelphia signifies *brotherly love*, and expresses the position and spirit of those who received the Advent message up to the autumn of 1844. As they came out of the sectarian churches, they left party names and party feelings behind, and every heart beat in union, as they gave the alarm to the churches and to the world, and pointed to the coming of the Son of man as the believer's true hope. Selfishness and covetousness were laid aside, and a spirit of consecration and sacrifice was cherished. The Spirit of God was with every true believer, and his praise upon every tongue. Those who were not in that movement know nothing of the deep searching of heart, consecration of all to God, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit, and pure, fervent love for each other, which true believers then enjoyed. Those who were in that movement are aware that language would fail to describe that holy, happy state.

The Key of David. A key is a symbol of power. The Son of God is the rightful heir to David's throne; and he is about to take to himself his great power and reign; hence he is represented as having the key of David. The throne of David, or of Christ, on which he is to reign, is included in the capital of his kingdom, the New Jerusalem, now above, but which

is to be located on this earth, where he is to reign forever and ever. Rev. 21 : 1–5 ; Luke 1 : 32, 33.

He that Openeth and no Man Shutteth, etc. To understand this language, it is necessary to look at Christ's position and work as connected with his ministry in the sanctuary or true tabernacle above. Heb. 8 : 2. A figure, or pattern of this heavenly sanctuary once existed here upon earth in the sanctuary built by Moses. Ex. 25 : 8, 9 ; Acts 7 : 44 ; Heb. 9 : 1, 21, 23, 24. The earthly building had two apartments,—the holy place and the most holy place. Ex. 26 : 33, 34. In the first apartment were the candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the altar of incense. In the second, were the ark which contained the tables of the covenant, or ten commandments, and the cherubim. Heb. 9 : 1–5. Likewise the sanctuary in which Christ ministers in Heaven has two apartments. Heb. 9 : 24. See also verses 8 and 12, and chap. 10 : 19, in each of which texts the words rendered "holiest" and "holy place" are plural in the original, and should be rendered holy places. And as all things were made after their pattern, the heavenly sanctuary has also furniture similar to that of the worldly. For the antitype of the golden candlestick and altar of incense in the first apartment, see Rev. 4 : 5 ; 8 : 3 ; and for the antitype of the ark of the covenant, with its ten commandments, see Rev. 11 : 19. In the worldly sanctuary the priests ministered. Ex. 28 : 41, 43 ; Heb. 9 : 6, 7 ; 13 : 11, etc. The ministry of these priests was a shadow of the ministry of Christ in the sanctuary in Heaven.

Heb. 8 : 4, 5. A complete round of service was performed in the earthly tabernacle once every year. Heb. 9 : 7. But in the tabernacle above, the service is performed once for all. Heb. 7 : 27; 9 : 12. At the close of the yearly typical service, the high priest opened the door of the most holy place of the sanctuary, to go in and make an atonement, called the cleansing of the sanctuary. Lev. 16 : 20, 30, 33; Eze. 45 : 18. At the same time the service of the first apartment, or holy place, ceased. Lev. 16 : 17. A similar opening and shutting, or change of ministration, must be accomplished by Christ, when the time comes for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. And the time did come for this service to commence at the close of the 2300 days in 1844. To this event the opening and shutting mentioned in the text under consideration can appropriately apply; the opening being the opening of his ministration in the most holy place, and the shutting, its cessation in the first apartment, or holy place. Dan. 8 : 14.

Verse 9 probably applies to those who do not keep pace with the advancing light of truth, and who oppose those that do. Such shall yet be made to feel and confess that God loves those who, not rejecting the past fulfillments of his word, nor stereotyping themselves in a creed, continue to advance in the knowledge of his truth.

The Word of My Patience. Says John in Rev. 14 : 12, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Those who now live in pa-

tient, faithful obedience to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will be kept in the hour of temptation and peril just before us. See chap. 13 : 13–17.

Behold, I Come Quickly. The second coming of Christ is here again brought to view, and with more startling emphasis than in any of the preceding messages. The nearness of that event is here urged upon the attention of believers. The message applies to a period when that great event is impending. And in this we have most indubitable evidence of the prophetic nature of these messages. What is said of the first three churches contains no allusion to the second coming of Christ, from the fact that they do not cover a period during which that event could be scripturally expected. But we come down to the Thyatiran church, a few of whose members would probably live to behold the advent of the Lord in glory, and, as if then the time had come when this great hope was just beginning to dawn upon the church, the mind is carried forward to it by a single allusion: "Hold fast till I come." We come down to the next state of the church, the Sardis, the church which occupies a position still nearer that event, and the great proclamation is brought to view which was to herald it, and the duty of watching enjoined upon the church; "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." We reach the Philadelphian church, still further down in the stream of time, and the nearness of the same great event then

leads Him who "is holy and true," to utter the stirring declaration, "Behold, I come quickly." How evident is it from all this that these churches occupy positions successively nearer the great day of the Lord, as in each succeeding one, and in a continually increasing ratio, this great event is made more and more prominent, and more definitely and impressively urged upon the attention of the church.

Faithfulness Enjoined. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Not that by our faithfulness we are depriving any one else of a crown; but the verb rendered, to take, has a number of definitions, one of which is "to take away, snatch from, *deprive of.*" Hold fast that thou hast, that no man deprive you of the crown of life. Let no one, and no thing, induce you to yield up the truth, or pervert you from the right ways of the Lord; for by so doing they will cause you to lose the reward.

A Pillar in the Temple. The overcomer in this address has the promise of being made a pillar in the temple of God, and going no more out. The temple here must denote the church; and the promise of being made a pillar therein is the strongest promise that could be given, of a place of honor, permanence and safety in the church, under the figure of a heavenly building. And when the time comes that this part of the promise is fulfilled, probation with the overcomer is past, he is fully established in the truth, and sealed. "He shall go

no more out;" that is, there is no more danger of his falling away; he is the Lord's forever; his salvation is sure.

But they are to have more than this: From the moment they overcome, and are sealed for Heaven, they are labeled, if we may so express it, for the New Jerusalem. They are to have written upon them the name of God, whose property they are, the name of the New Jerusalem, to which place they are going, not Old Jerusalem, where some are vainly looking; and they have upon them the new name of Christ, by whose authority they are to receive everlasting life, and enter into the kingdom. Thus sealed and labeled, the saints of God are safe. No enemy will be able to prevent their reaching their destination, their glorious haven of rest, Jerusalem above.

VERSE 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: 15: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. 16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent. 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him,

and he with me. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Laodicea signifies *the judging of the people;* or, according to Cruden, *a just people.* This message brings to view the closing scenes of probation. It reveals a period of Judgment. It is the last stage of the church. It consequently applies to believers under the third message, the last message of mercy before the coming of Christ, chap. 14 : 9–14, while the great day of atonement is transpiring, and the investigative Judgment is going forward upon the house of God,—a period during which the just and holy law of God is taken by the waiting church as their rule of life.

These Things Saith the Amen. This is then the final message to the churches ere the close of probation. And though the description he gives to the indifferent Laodiceans, of their condition, is fearful and startling, nevertheless it cannot be denied ; for the Witness is "faithful and true." Moreover he is "the beginning of the creation of God." Some understand by this language that Christ was the first created being, dating his existence far back before any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God. But the language does not necessarily imply this ; for the words, "the beginning of the creation," may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking, was begun by him. And it is expressly declared that "without him was not anything

made that was made." Others, however, take the word ἀρχή to mean the agent or efficient cause, which is one of the definitions of the word, understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called "the only begotten" of the Father. It would seem utterly inappropriate to apply this expression to any being created in the ordinary sense of that term.

The charge he brings against the Laodiceans is, that they are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. They lack that religious fervency, zeal, and devotion, which their position in the world's closing history, and the light of prophecy beaming upon their pathway, demand that they should manifest; and this lukewarmness is shown by a lack of good works; for it is from a knowledge of their works that the faithful and true Witness brings this fearful charge against them.

I Would Thou Wert Cold or Hot. Three states are brought to view in this message: the cold, the lukewarm, and the hot. It is important to determine what condition they each denote, in order to guard against wrong conclusions. What the term hot means, it is not difficult to conceive. The mind at once calls up a state of intense fervency and zeal, when all the affections, raised to the highest pitch, are drawn out for God and his cause, and manifest themselves in corresponding works. To be lukewarm is to lack this zeal, to be in a state in which heart and earnestness are wanting, in which there is no

self-denial that costs anything, no cross-bearing that is felt, no determined witnessing for Christ, and no valiant aggression that keeps sinews strained and armor bright; and, worst of all, to be entirely *satisfied* with that condition. But to be cold—what is that? Does it denote a state of corruption, wickedness, and sin, such as characterizes the world of unbelievers? We cannot so regard it, for the following reasons:—

1. It would seem harsh and repulsive to represent Christ as wishing, under any circumstances, that persons should be in such a condition; but he says, "I *would* thou wert *cold* or hot."

2. No state can be more offensive to Christ than that of the sinner in open rebellion, and his heart filled with every evil. It would therefore be incorrect to represent him as preferring that state to any position which his people can occupy while they are still retained as his.

3. The threat of rejection in verse 16 is *because* they are *neither* cold nor hot. As much as to say that if they were *either* cold or hot, they would not be rejected. But if by cold is meant a state of open worldly wickedness, they would be rejected therefor very speedily. Hence, such cannot be its meaning.

We are consequently forced to the conclusion that no reference is had whatever to those outside of his church, by this language of our Lord, but that he refers to three degrees of spiritual affections, two of which are more acceptable to him than the third. Heat and cold are preferable to lukewarmness. But

what kind of a spiritual state is denoted by the term, cold? We may remark first that it is a state of *feeling*. In this respect, it is superior to lukewarmness, which is a state of comparative insensibility, indifference, and supreme self-satisfaction. To be hot is also to be in a state of feeling. And as hot denotes joyous fervency, and a lively exercise of all the affections, with a heart buoyant with the sensible presence and love of God, so by cold would seem to be denoted a spiritual condition characterized by a destitution of these traits, yet one in which the individual *feels* such destitution, and longs to recover his lost treasures. This state is well expressed by the language of Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Job 23 : 3. In this state there is not indifference, nor is there content; but there is a sense of coldness, unfitness, and discomfort, and a groping and seeking after something better. There is hope of a person in this condition. What a man feels that he lacks and wants, he will earnestly strive to obtain. The most discouraging feature of the lukewarm is that they are conscious of no lack, and feel that they have need of nothing. Hence it is easy to see why our Lord should prefer to behold his church in a state of comfortless coldness, rather than in a state of comfortable, easy, indifferent lukewarmness. Cold, a person will not long remain. His efforts will soon lead him to the fervid state. But lukewarm, there is danger of remaining till the faithful and true Witness is obliged to reject him as a nauseous and loathsome thing.

I Will Spue Thee out of My Mouth. Here the

figure is still further carried out, and the rejection of the lukewarm expressed by the well-known nauseating effects of tepid water. And this denotes a final rejection, an utter separation from his church.

Rich and Increased in Goods. Such the Laodiceans think is their condition. They are not hypocrites, because they "*know not*" that they are poor, miserable, blind, and naked.

The Counsel Given Them. Buy of me, says the true Witness, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. This shows at once to the deceived Laodiceans the objects they lack, and the extent of their destitution. It shows, too, where they can obtain those things in which they are so fearfully poor; it brings before them the necessity of speedily obtaining them. The case is so urgent that our great Advocate in the court above sends us special counsel on the point; and the fact that He who has condescended to point out our lack, and counsel us to buy, is the one who has these things to bestow, and invites us to come to him for them, is the best possible guarantee that our application will be respected, and our requests granted.

But, by what means can we buy these things? Just as we buy all other gospel graces. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. 55 : 1. We thus buy, by the asking;

buy, by throwing away the worthless baubles of earth, and receiving priceless treasures in their stead; buy, by simply coming and receiving; buy, giving nothing in return. And what do we buy on these gracious terms? Bread that perishes not, spotless raiment that soils not, riches that corrupt not, and an inheritance that fadeth not. Strange traffic, this! Yet thus the Lord condescends to deal with his people. He might compel us to come in the manner and with the mien of beggars; but, instead of this, he gives us the treasures of his grace, and in return receives our worthlessness, that we may take the blessings he has to bestow, not as pittances dealt out to mendicants, but as the legitimate possessions of honorable purchase.

The things to be obtained demand especial notice. They are enumerated as follows:—

1. *Gold Tried in the Fire.* Gold, literally considered, is the comprehensive name for all worldly wealth and riches. Figuratively considered, it must denote that which constitutes spiritual riches. What grace, then, is represented by the gold? or, rather, what graces? for, doubtless, no one single grace can be said to answer to the full import of that term. The Lord said to the church of Smyrna that he knew their poverty, but they were rich; and the testimony shows that their riches consisted of that which was finally to put them in possession of a crown of life. Says James, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world *rich in faith*, and heirs of the kingdom

which he hath promised to them that love him?" "Faith," says Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To be "rich toward God," rich in the spiritual sense, is to have a clear title to the promises, to be an heir of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. And how do we obtain this heirship? In the same way that Abraham obtained the promise; that is, through faith. Rom. 4:13, 14. No wonder, then, that Paul should devote an entire chapter in Hebrews (chap. 11) to this important subject, setting forth the mighty achievements that have been accomplished, and the precious promises that have been obtained, through faith; and that he should, in the first verse of the next chapter, as the grand conclusion to his argument, exhort Christians to lay aside every weight, and the sin (of unbelief) that so easily besets them. Nothing will sooner dry up the springs of spirituality, and sink us into utter poverty in reference to the things of the kingdom of God, than to let faith go out and unbelief come in. For faith must enter into every action that is pleasing in his sight; and in coming to him, the first thing is, to believe that he is; and it is through faith, as the chief agent under the grace which is the gift of God, that we are to be saved Heb. 11:6; Eph. 2:8.

From this, it would seem that faith is a principal

element of spiritual wealth. But if, as already remarked, no one grace can answer to the full import of the term gold, so, doubtless, other things are included with faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," says Paul. Hence hope is an inseparable accompaniment of faith. Heb. 11:1; Rom. 8:24, 25. And again Paul tells us that faith works by love, and speaks in another place of being "rich in good works." Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 6:18. Hence love cannot be separated from faith. We then have before us the three objects associated together by Paul in 1 Cor. 13,—faith, hope, and charity, or love; and the greatest of these is charity. Such is the gold tried by fire which we are counseled to buy.

2. *White Raiment.* On this point there would not seem to be much room for controversy. A few texts will furnish a key to the understanding of this expression. Says the prophet, Isa. 64:6, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." We are counseled to buy the opposite of filthy rags, which would be complete and spotless raiment. The same figure is used in Zech. 3:3, 4. And John, in the 19th chapter of the Revelation, verse 8, says plainly that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

3. *The Eye-salve.* On this there is as little room for a diversity of opinion as upon the white raiment. The anointing of the eyes is certainly not to be taken in a literal sense; and, reference being made to spiritual things, the eye-salve must denote that by which our spiritual discernment is quickened.

There is but one agent revealed to us in the word of God by which this is accomplished; and that is the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:38, we read that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." And the same writer through whom came this Revelation from Jesus Christ, wrote to the church in his first epistle, 2:20, as follows: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." In verse 27, he enlarges upon this point thus: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." By referring to his gospel, it is found that the work which he here sets forth as accomplished by the anointing, is exactly the same that he there attributes to the Holy Spirit. John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." See also John 16:13.

Thus, in a formal and solemn manner, are we counseled by the faithful and true Witness, under the figures of gold, white raiment, and eye-salve, to seek from him, speedily and earnestly, an increase of the heavenly graces, of faith, hope, charity, that righteousness which he alone can furnish, and an unction from the Holy Spirit. But how is it possible that a people, lacking these things, should think

themselves rich and increased with goods? A plausible inference may here be drawn, which is perhaps also a necessary one, as there is room for no other. It will be observed that no fault is found with the Laodiceans on account of the doctrines they hold. They are not accused of harboring any Jezebel in their midst, or countenancing the doctrines of Balaam or the Nicolaitanes. So far as we can learn from the address to them, their belief is correct, and their theory sound. The inference, therefore, is that, having a correct theory, therewith they are content. They are satisfied with a correct form of doctrine without its power. Having received light concerning the closing events of this dispensation, and having a correct theoretical knowledge of the truths that pertain to the last generation of men, they are inclined to rest in this, to the neglect of the spiritual part of religion. It is by their actions, doubtless, not by their words, that they say they are rich and increased with goods. Having so much light and so much truth, what can they want besides? And if, with a commendable tenacity they defend the theory, and in their outward life conform to the increasing light upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is not their righteousness complete? Rich and increased in goods, and needing nothing! Here is their failure. Their whole being should cry out for the Spirit, the zeal, the fervency, the life, the power, of a living Christianity, and their righteousness should consist in a swallowing up of self and all its works in the merits of their Redeemer.

The Token of Love. This, strange as it may seem, is chastisement. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." If we are without chastisement we are not sons. Heb. 12. "A general law," says Thompson, "of his gracious economy is here set forth. As all need chastisement in some measure, they in some measure receive it, and thus have proof of the Saviour's attachment. This is a hard lesson to learn, and believers are dull scholars; yet here and throughout God's word and providence it stands, that trials are his benedictions, and that no child escapes the rod. The incorrigibly misshapen and coarse-grained blocks are rejected, whilst those chosen for the glorious structure are subjected to the chisel and the hammer. There is no cluster on the true vine but must pass through the winepress. 'For myself,' said an old divine under affliction, 'for myself, I bless God, I have observed and felt so much mercy in this angry dispensation of God that I am almost transported. I am, sure, highly pleased with thinking how infinitely sweet his mercies are, when his judgments are so gracious.' In view, then, of the origin and design of the chastisements you receive, 'Be zealous and repent.' Lose no time; lose not a blow of the rod, but repent at once. Be fervent in spirit. Such is the first appliance of encouragement."

Be Zealous and Repent. Although, as we have seen, the state represented by coldness is preferable to one of lukewarmness, yet that is not a state in which our Lord ever desires to find us. We are

never exhorted to seek that state. There is a far better one which we are counseled to attain; and that is, to be zealous; to be fervent; and to have our hearts all aglow in the service of our Master.

Christ Knocking at the Door. Let us listen again to the author above quoted: "Here is the heart of hearts. Notwithstanding their offensive attitude, their unlovely character, such is his love to their souls that he humbles himself to solicit the privilege of making them blessed. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' Why does he? Not because he is without home elsewhere. Among the mansions in his Father's house there is not one entrance closed to him. He is the life of every heart, the light in every eye, the song on every tongue in glory. But he goes round from door to door in Laodicea. He stands at each, and knocks, because he came to seek and to save that which is lost, because he cannot give up the purpose of communicating eternal life to as many as the Father has given him, and because he cannot become known to the inmate unless the door be opened and a welcome given him. Have you bought a piece of ground? have you bought five yoke of oxen? is your hat in your hand, and do you pray to be excused? He knocks and knocks. But you cannot receive company at present; you are worn out with labor; you have wheeled round the sofa; you are making yourself comfortable, and send word that you are engaged. He knocks and knocks. . . . . It is the hour for church prayer-meeting, or for

monthly concert; there is opportunity to pay a Christian visit to an individual or a family; but you move not. . . . . Oh, nauseous lukewarmness! Oh, fatal worldliness! The Lord of glory comes all the way from his celestial palace—comes in poverty, in sweat, in blood—comes to the door of a professed friend, who owes all to him, and cannot get in!—comes to rescue a man whose house is on fire, and he will not admit him! Oh, the height, the depth of Jesus Christ's forbearance! Even the heathen Publius received Paul, and lodged him three days courteously. Shall nominal Christians tell the Lord of apostles that they have no room for him?"

If Any Man Hear My Voice. The Lord entreats, then, as well as knocks. And the word *if* implies that some will not hear. Though he stands and knocks and entreats till his locks are wet with the dews of night, yet some will close their ears to his tender entreaties. But it is not enough to simply hear. It is to hear, and open the door. And many who hear at first the voice, and for a time feel inclined to heed, will doubtless, alas! fail in the end to do that which is necessary to secure to themselves the communion of the heavenly guest. Reader, are your ears open to the entreaties which the Saviour directs to you? Is the sound of his voice a welcome sound? Will you heed it? Will you open the door and let him in? Or is the door of your heart held fast by heaps of this world's rubbish which you are unwilling to remove? Remember that the Lord of life

never forces an entrance. He condescends to come and knock, and seek admittance; but he takes up his abode in those hearts only, where he is then a welcome and invited guest.

And then the promise! "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." How forcible and touching the figure! Friend with friend, partaking of the cheerful and social meal! Mind with mind, holding free and intimate converse! And what a festal scene must that be where the King of glory is a guest! No common degree of union, no ordinary blessing, no usual privilege, is denoted by this language. Who, under such tender entreaty and so gracious a promise, can remain indifferent? Nor are we required to furnish the table for this exalted guest. This he does himself, not with the gross nutriment of earth, but with viands from his own heavenly storehouse. Here he sets before us foretastes of the glory soon to be revealed. Here he gives us earnests of our future inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Verily, when we shall comply with the conditions and receive this promise, we shall experience the rising of the day-star in our hearts, and behold the dawn of a glorious morning for the church of God.

The Final Promise. The promise of supping with his disciples is made by the Lord to them, before the final promise to the overcomer. This shows that the blessings included in that promise are to be enjoyed in this probationary state. And now, superadded to all these, is the promise to the overcomer. "To him

that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Here the promises of the Lord culminate. From being at first rebellious, and then fallen, degraded, and polluted, man is brought by the work of the Redeemer back into reconciliation with God, cleansed from his pollutions, redeemed from the fall, made immortal, and finally raised to a seat upon the very throne of his Saviour. Honor and exaltation could go no further. Human minds cannot conceive that state, human language cannot describe it. We can only labor on till, if overcomers at last, we shall "know what it is to be there."

But there is in this verse not only a glorious promise, there is also an important doctrine. We learn by this that Christ reigns consecutively upon two thrones. One is the throne of his Father, the other is his own throne. He declares in this verse that he has overcome, and is now set down with his Father in his throne. He is now associated with the Father in the throne of universal dominion, placed at his right hand, far above all principality, power, might, and dominion. Eph. 1 : 20–22, etc. While in this position, he is a priest-King. He is a priest, "a minister of the sanctuary;" but at the same time he is "on the right hand of the *throne* of the Majesty in the Heavens." Heb. 8 : 1, 2. This position and work of our Lord was thus predicted by the prophet Zechariah: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts

[God], saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch [Christ]; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. . . . And he [Christ] shall sit and rule upon his [God's] throne; and he [Christ] shall be a priest upon his [God's] throne; and the counsel of peace [in the sacrifice and priestly work of Christ in behalf of repenting man] shall be between them both." Zech. 6 : 12, 13. But the time is coming when he is to change his position, and, leaving the throne of his Father, take his own throne; and this must be when the time comes for the reward of the overcomers; for when they enter upon their reward, they are to sit with Christ on his throne as he has overcome and is now seated with the Father upon his throne. This change in the position of Christ is set forth by Paul in 1 Cor. 15 : 24–28, as follows:—

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

The truths taught in this portion of Scripture may perhaps be most briefly expressed by a slight paraphrase, and by giving, in every instance, instead of the pronouns, the nouns to which they respectively refer. Thus:—

"Then cometh the end (of the present dispensation), when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom (which he now holds conjointly with the Father) to God, even the Father; when God shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (that is opposed to the work of the Son). For Christ must reign (on the throne of his Father) till the Father hath put all enemies under Christ's feet. [See Ps. 110 : 1.] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God (then) hath put all things under Christ's feet. But when God saith, All things are put under Christ (and he commences his reign upon his own throne), it is manifest that God is excepted, who did put all things under Christ. And when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then shall Christ also himself be subject unto God that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

That this is a correct version of this scripture may be easily verified. The only question that can be raised is concerning the persons to whom the pronouns refer; and any attempt to make the pronouns refer to Christ, which in the foregoing paraphrase are referred to God, will be found, when traced through the quotation, to make poor sense of the language of Paul.

From this it will be seen that the kingdom which

Christ delivers up to the Father, is that which he holds at the present time upon his Father's throne, where he tells us he is now seated. He delivers up this kingdom at the end of this dispensation when the time comes for him to take his own throne. After this, he reigns on the throne of his father David, and is subject only to God, who still retains his position upon the throne of universal dominion. In this reign of Christ the saints participate. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me upon my throne." "And they lived," says John, dating from the first resurrection, chap. 20 : 4, "and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This we understand to be a special reign, or for a special purpose, as will be noticed in that chapter; for the actual reign of the saints, is to be "forever and ever." Dan. 7 : 18, 27. How can any earthly object divert our gaze from this durable and heavenly prospect?

Thus close the messages to the seven churches. How pointed and searching their testimony! What lessons do they contain for all Christians in all ages! It is as true with the last church as with the first, that all their works are known to Him who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. From his scrutinizing gaze nothing can be hid. And while his threatenings to the hypocrites and evil workers, as in justice they may be, are awful, how ample, how comforting, how gracious, how glorious, his promises to those who love and follow him with singleness of heart.

Chapter IV.

A NEW VISION. THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY.

Verse 1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

After This. In the first three chapters John presents the vision he had of the Son of man, comprising a description of his majestic person, and a record of the words which, with a voice as the sound of many waters, he was heard to utter. A new scene and a new vision now open before us; and the expression, "after this," does not denote that what is recorded in chapter 4, and onward, was to take place after the *fulfillment* of everything recorded in the three preceding chapters, but only that after he had seen and heard what is there recorded, he had the new view which he now introduces.

A Door Was Opened in Heaven. Let it be noticed that John says, "A door was opened *in* Heaven," not *into* Heaven. It was not an opening of Heaven itself before the mind of John, as in the case of Stephen, Acts 7:56, but some place or apartment in Heaven was opened before him, and he was

permitted to behold what was transpiring within. That this apartment which John saw opened was the heavenly sanctuary, will plainly appear from other portions of the book.

Things Which Must Be Hereafter. Compare with this, chap. 1 : 1. The great object of the Revelation seems to be the presentation of future events for the purpose of informing, edifying, and comforting the church.

VERSE 2. And immediately I was in the Spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3. And he that sat was, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

In the Spirit. Once before we have had this expression, namely in chap. 1 : 10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," where it was taken to express the fact that John had a vision upon the Sabbath or Lord's day. If it there expressed the state of being in vision, it would denote the same thing here; and, consequently, the first vision ended with chapter 3, and a new one is here introduced. Nor is it any objection to this view that John, previous to this, as is learned from the first verse of this chapter, was in such a spiritual state as to be able to look up and see a door opened in Heaven, and to hear a spiritual

voice like the mighty sound of a trumpet calling him up to a nearer prospect of heavenly things. It is evident that there may be such states of ecstasy independent of vision, just as Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, could look up and see the Heavens opened, and the Son of man on the right hand of God. To be in the Spirit denotes a still higher state of spiritual elevation. On what day this vision was given we are not informed.

Being fully wrapped again in heavenly vision, the first object which he beholds is a throne set in Heaven, and the Divine Being seated thereon. The description of the appearance of this personage clothed in the mingled colors of the jasper, frequently a purple, and the blood-red sardine stone, is such as to suggest at once to the mind a monarch vested with his royal robes. And round about the throne there was a rainbow, both adding to the grandeur of the scene, and reminding us that though he who sits upon the throne is an almighty and absolute ruler, he is nevertheless the covenant-keeping God.

The Four and Twenty Elders. The question once proposed to John concerning a certain company, has frequently arisen concerning these four and twenty elders: "Who are these? and whence came they?" It will be observed that they are clothed with white raiment, and have on their heads crowns of gold; which are both tokens of a conflict completed and a victory gained. From this we conclude that they were once participants in the Christian warfare, once trod, in common with all saints, this earthly pilgrim-

age, but have overcome, and for some good purpose, in advance of the great multitude of the redeemed, are wearing their victor crowns in the heavenly world. Indeed, they plainly tell us as much as this, in the song of praise which they, in connection with the four beasts, ascribe to the Lamb, in the 9th verse of the following chapter: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This song is sung before any of the events in the prophecy of the seven seals transpire; for it is sung to set forth the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book and open the seals, on the ground of what he had already accomplished, which was their redemption. It is not, therefore, thrown in here by anticipation, having its application in the future; but it expresses an absolute and finished fact in the history of those who sung it. These, then, were a class of redeemed persons, redeemed from this earth, redeemed as all others must be redeemed, by the precious blood of Christ.

Do we in any other place read of such a class of redeemed ones? We think Paul refers to the same company when he writes to the Ephesians thus: "Wherefore he saith, when he [Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." The margin says, he led a "multitude of captives." Eph. 4:8. Going back to the events that occurred in connection with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, we read, "And the graves

were opened. And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Matt. 27 : 52. Thus the answer to our question comes back, gathered unmistakably from the sacred page. These are some of those who came out of their graves at the resurrection of Christ, and who were numbered with the illustrious multitude which he led up from the captivity of Death's dark domain, when he ascended in triumph on high. Matthew records their resurrection ; Paul, their ascension ; and John beholds them in Heaven performing the sacred duties which they were raised up to accomplish.

In this view we are not alone. Wesley speaks as follows concerning the four and twenty elders: "Clothed in white raiment.] This and their golden crowns, show that they had already finished their course, and taken their places among the citizens of Heaven. They are never termed souls, and hence it is probable that they had glorified bodies already. Compare Matt. 27 : 52."

The Seven Lamps of Fire. In these lamps of fire we have an appropriate antitype of the golden candlestick of the typical sanctuary, with its seven ever-burning lamps. This candlestick was placed by divine direction, in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. Ex. 25 : 31, 32, 37 ; 26 : 35 ; 27 : 20 ; etc. And now when John tells us that a door was opened in Heaven, and in the apartment thus disclosed to view he sees the antitype of the candlestick

of the earthly sanctuary, it is good proof that he is looking into the first apartment of the sanctuary above.

VERSE 6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9. And when those beasts give glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, 10, The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The Sea of Glass. Not composed of glass, but a broad expanse, resembling glass; that is, says Greenfield, transparent, brilliant. This idea is further carried out by its being likened to crystal, which is defined to mean "anything concreted and pellucid, like ice, or glass." The position of this sea is such as to show that it bears no analogy to the laver of the ancient typical service.

It may extend under, and be the foundation of, the throne, and even further, of the city itself. It is again brought to view in chap. 15 : 2, as the place where the overcomers, in the ecstatic joy of final victory, will soon stand.

The Four Beasts. It is a very unhappy translation which has given us the term "beasts" in this verse. The word ζῶον, denotes properly a living creature. Bloomfield says, "'Four living creatures' (not *beasts*). So Heinr. renders it. . . . . The propriety of this correction, is now, I believe, generally agreed upon by commentators. The word is very different from θηρίον, used to designate the prophetic beasts in the 13th and following chapters. (Scholefield.) It may be added that Bulkeley adduces several examples of ζῶον, to denote not only creature, but even a human being; especially one from Origen who uses it of our Lord Jesus."

Similar imagery is used in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The qualities which would seem to be signified by the emblems, are strength, perseverance, reason, and swiftness,—strength, of affection; perseverance, in carrying out the requirements of duty; reason, in comprehending the divine will; and swiftness, in obeying. These living beings are even more intimately connected with the throne than the four and twenty elders, being represented as in the midst of, and round about, it. Like the elders, these, too, in their song to the Lamb, ascribe to him praise for having redeemed them from the earth. They therefore belong to the same company, and represent a part of the great multitude who, as already described (see remarks on verse 4), have been led up on high from the captivity of death. Concerning the object of their redemption, see remarks on chapter 5 : 8.

They Rest Not. "Oh! happy unrest!" beautifully exclaims John Wesley; and the theme of their constant worship is, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." No sublimer strain ever issued from created lips. And they repeat it "day and night;" or, continually; these terms only denoting the manner in which time is reckoned here; for there can be no night where the throne of God is.

We mortals are apt to tire of the repetition of the simple testimony we bear here to the goodness and mercy of God; and we are sometimes tempted to say nothing, because we cannot continually say something new. But may we not learn a profitable lesson from the course of these holy beings above, who never grow weary of the ceaseless repetition of these words, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;" and to whom these words never grow old; because their hearts ever glow with a sense of his holiness, goodness, and love? Their praise does not become to them monotonous; for with every utterance they gain a new view of the attributes of the Almighty; they reach a greater hight of comprehension in their vision of his perfections; the horizon expands before them; their hearts enlarge; and the new emotions of adoration, from their new stand-point, draw from them a fresh utterance of their holy salutation, new even to themselves, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"

So, even with us here, though remarks are often repeated in reference to the goodness, the mercy,

and the love of God, the value of his truth, and the attractions of the world to come, these should not grow stale upon the ear; for we should all our lives be rising to new conceptions of the blessings embraced in these glorious themes.

Concerning the expression, "which was, and is, and is to come," see remarks on chap. 1 : 4.

"*Thou Art Worthy,* O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power." How worthy, we never shall be able to realize, till, like the holy beings who utter this language, changed to immortality, we are presented faultless before the presence of his glory. Jude 24.

Thou Hast Created All Things. The works of creation furnish the foundation for the honor, glory, and power ascribed to God. "And for thy pleasure," or through thy will, *διὰ τὸ θέλημα σου,* they are, and were created. God willed, and all things came into existence; and by the same power they are preserved and sustained.

Chapter V.

THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY CONTINUED.

VERSE 1. And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

A new chapter here opens, but not a new scene. The same view is still before the mind of the apostle. By the words, "him that sat on the throne," is evidently meant the Father, as the Son is subsequently introduced as "a Lamb as it had been slain." The book which John here saw, contained a revelation of scenes that were to transpire in the history of the church to the end of time. Its being held in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne may signify that a knowledge of the future rests with God alone, only so far as he sees fit to reveal it to others.

The Book. The books in use at the time the Revelation was given, were not in the form of books as now made. They did not consist of a series of leaves bound together; but were composed of strips of parchment, or other material, longer or shorter, one or more, and rolled up. On this point, Wesley remarks:—

"The usual books of the ancients were not like

ours, but were volumes or long pieces of parchment, rolled upon a long stick as we frequently roll silks. Such was this represented, which was sealed with seven seals. Not as if the apostle saw all the seals at once; for there were seven volumes wrapped up one within another, each of which was sealed; so that upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up till that was opened, and so on to the seventh."

On the same point, Scott remarks: "It appeared as a roll, consisting of several parchments, according to the custom of those times; and though it was supposed to be written within, yet nothing could be read till the seals were loosed. It was afterward found to contain seven parchments, or small volumes, each of which was separately sealed; but if all the seals had been on the outside, nothing could have been read till they had all been loosed; whereas the loosing of each seal was followed by some discovery of the contents of the roll. Yet the appearance on the outside seems to have indicated that it consisted of seven, or at least of several, parts."

Bloomfield says, "The long *rolls* of parchment used by the ancients, which we call *books*, were seldom written but on one side; namely, that which was, in rolling, turned inward." So, doubtless, this book was not written within and on the backside, as the punctuation of our common version makes it read. "Grotius, Lowman, Fuller, &c.," says the Cottage Bible, "remove the comma

thus: 'Written within, and on the back (or outside) sealed,' &c." How these seals were placed, is sufficiently explained in the notes from Wesley and Scott, given above.

VERSE 2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3. And no man in Heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

The Challenge. God, as it were, holds forth this book to the view of the universe, and a strong angel, one doubtless of great eminence and power, comes forth as a crier, and with a mighty voice challenges all creatures in the universe to try the strength of their wisdom in opening the counsels of God. Who can be found worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof? A pause ensues. In silence the universe owns its inability and unworthiness to enter into the counsels of the Creator. "And no man in Heaven," *οὐδεις*, not merely no man, but no one, no being in Heaven. Is not here proof that the faculties of angels are limited, like those of man, in respect to penetrating the future and disclosing what is to come? And when the apostle saw that no one came forward to open the book, he greatly feared that the counsels of God which it contained, in reference to his people, would never be disclosed, and in the natural tenderness of his feelings, and concern for the church, he wept much. "How far are they," says Wesley,

"from the temper of St. John, who inquire after anything rather than the contents of this book!"

Upon the phrase "I wept much," Benson offers the following beautiful remarks: "Being greatly affected with the thought that no being whatsoever was to be found able to understand, reveal, and accomplish the divine counsels, fearing they would still remain concealed from the church. This weeping of the apostle sprang from greatness of mind. The tenderness of heart, which he always had, appeared more clearly now he was out of his own power. The Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears will it be understood."

VERSE 5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

Not long is John permitted to weep. God is not willing that any knowledge which can be of benefit to his people, shall be withheld. Provision is made for the opening of the book. Hence, one of the elders says to him, "Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Why one of the elders should impart this information to John, in preference to some other being, does not appear, unless it is that hav-

ing been redeemed, they would be especially interested in all that pertained to the welfare of the church on earth. Christ is here called the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." Why called a lion? and why of the tribe of Judah? As to the first, it is probably to denote his strength. As the lion is the king of beasts, the monarch of the forest, he thus becomes a fit emblem of kingly authority and power. "Of the tribe of Judah." Doubtless he receives this appellation from the prophecy in Gen. 49 : 9, 10.

The Root of David. The source and sustainer of David as to his position and power. That David's position was specially ordained of Christ, and that he was specially sustained by him, there can be no doubt. David was the type, Christ the antitype. David's throne and reign over Israel was a type of Christ's reign over his people. He shall reign upon the throne of his father David. Luke 1 : 32, 33. As Christ appeared in the line of David's descendants when he took upon himself our nature, he is also called the offspring of David, and a root out of the stem of Jesse. Isa. 11 : 1, 10; Rev. 22 : 16. His connection with the throne of David being thus set forth, and his right thus shown to rule over the people of God, there was a propriety in entrusting to him the opening of the seals.

Hath Prevailed. These words indicate that the right to open the book was acquired by a victory gained in some previous conflict. And so we find

it set forth in subsequent portions of this chapter. The very next scene introduces us to the great work of Christ as the Redeemer of the world, the shedding of his blood for the remission of sin, and the salvation of man. In this work he was subjected to the fiercest assaults of Satan. But he endured his temptations, bore the agonies of the cross, rose a victor over death and the grave, made the way of redemption sure, triumphed! Hence the four living beings and the four and twenty elders sing, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

John looks to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and beholds a Lamb in the midst of the throne and of the four living beings and the elders, as it had been slain.

In the Midst of the Throne. Doddridge translates thus: "And I beheld in the middle space between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, there stood a Lamb," &c. In the center of the scene was the throne of the Father, and standing in the open space which surrounded it, was the Son, set forth under the symbol of a slain lamb. Around these there stood those saints who had been redeemed: first, those represented by the four living creatures, then the elders forming the second circle, and the angels, verse 11, forming a third circle. The worthiness of Christ as he thus stands forth under the figure of a slain lamb, is the admiration of all the holy throng.

As It Had Been Slain. Woodhouse, as quoted in the Comprehensive Commentary, says: "The Greek implies that the Lamb appeared with a wounded neck and throat, as if smitten at the altar as a victim." On this phrase Clarke says: "As if now in the act of being offered. This is very remarkable; so important is the sacrificial offering of Christ in the sight of God, that he is still represented as being in the very act of pouring out his blood for the offenses of man. This gives great advantage to faith; when any soul comes to the throne of grace, he finds a sacrifice there provided for him to offer to God."

Seven Horns and Seven Eyes. Horns are symbols of power, eyes of wisdom; and seven is a number denoting completion or perfection. We are thus taught that perfect power and perfect wisdom inhere in the Lamb, through the operation of the Spirit of God, called the seven spirits of God, to denote the fullness and perfection of its operation.

He Came and Took the Book. Commentators have found an incongruity in the idea of a lamb's taking the book, etc., and have had recourse to several expedients to avoid the difficulty. But is it not a well-established principle that any action may be attributed to a symbol, which could be appropriately performed by the person or being represented by the symbol? And is not this all the explanation that the passage needs? The lamb, we know, is a symbol of Christ. We know there is nothing incongruous in Christ's taking a book; and when we read that the book was taken, we think of the action not

as performed by the lamb, but by the one of whom the lamb is a symbol.

VERSE 8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

Vials Full of Odors. From this expression we get an idea of the employment of those redeemed ones represented by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders. They have golden vials or vessels full of odors, or, as the margin reads, incense, which are the prayers of saints. This is a work of ministry such as pertains to priests.

Says Scott: "It is indisputably manifest that the four living creatures join in, or rather lead, the worship of the Lamb as having redeemed *them* to God; and this proves beyond controversy that part of the redeemed church is meant by this emblem, and not angels whose worship is next described, but in language evidently different."

A. Barnes, in his notes on this passage, remarks: "The idea here is, therefore, that the representatives of the church in Heaven—the elders—spoken of as 'priests' are described as officiating in the temple above, in behalf of the church still below, and as offering incense while the church is engaged in prayer."

The reader will remember that in the ancient typ-

ical service, the high priest had many assistants; and when we consider that we are now looking into the sanctuary in Heaven, the conclusion at once follows that these redeemed ones are the assistants of our great High Priest above. For this purpose they were doubtless redeemed. And what could be more appropriate than that our Lord in his priestly work for the human race, should be assisted by noble members of that race whose holiness of life and purity of character had fitted them to be raised up for that purpose. See remarks on chapter 4 : 4.

We are aware that many entertain a great aversion to the idea of there being anything real and tangible in Heaven; and we can easily anticipate that the views here presented will be altogether too literal for such. To sustain themselves in their position they dwell much on the fact that the language is highly figurative; and that we cannot suppose there are or were any such things in Heaven as John describes. We reply that, though the Revelation deals largely in *figures*, it does not deal in *fictions*. There is reality in all the scenes described; and we gain an understanding of the reality, when we get a correct interpretation of the figures. Thus in this vision, we know that the One upon the throne is God. He is really there. We know the Lamb symbolizes Christ. He too is really there. He ascended with a literal, tangible body; and who can say that he does not still retain it? If, then, our great High Priest is a literal being, he must have a literal place

in which to minister. And if the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders represent those whom Christ led up from the captivity of death at the time of his resurrection and ascension, why are they not just as literal beings while there in Heaven as they were when they ascended?

The Song. It is called "a new song," new probably in respect to the occasion and the composition. They were the first that could sing it, being the first that were redeemed. They call themselves kings and priests. In what sense they are priests has already been noticed, they being the assistants of Christ in his priestly work. In the same sense probably they are also kings; for Christ is set down with his Father on his throne, and doubtless these, as ministers of his, have some part to act in connection with the government of Heaven in reference to this world.

The Anticipation. "We shall reign on the earth." Thus, notwithstanding they are redeemed, and surround the throne of God, and are in the presence of the Lamb that redeemed them, and are surrounded with the angelic hosts of Heaven, where all is glory ineffable, their song contemplates a still higher state, when the great work of redemption shall be completed, and they, with the whole redeemed family of God of every age, shall reign on the earth, which is the promised inheritance, and is to be the final and eternal residence of the saints. Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:29; Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 65:17–25; Rev. 21:1–5.

VERSE 11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

The Heavenly Sanctuary. How little conception have we of the magnitude and glory of the heavenly temple! Into that temple John was introduced at the opening of chapter 4, by the door which was opened in Heaven. Into the same temple, be it remembered, he is still looking in verses 11 and 12. And now he beholds the heavenly hosts. 1. Round about the throne are those represented by the four living creatures. 2. Next come the four and twenty elders. 3. Then John views, surrounding the whole, a multitude of the heavenly angels. How many? How many would we be likely to suppose could convene within the heavenly temple? "Ten thousand times ten thousand," exclaims the seer. In this expression alone we have one hundred millions! And then, as if no arithmetical expression was adequate to embrace the countless throng, he further adds, "And thousands of thousands!" Well might Paul call this, in Heb. 11:22, "an innumerable company of angels." And these were in the sanctuary above. Such was the company that John saw assembled at the place where the worship of a universe centers, and where the wondrous plan of human redemption is being carried forward to completion. And the

central object in this innumerable and holy throng, was the Lamb of God; and the central act of his life, which claimed their admiration, was the shedding of his blood for the salvation of fallen man; for every voice in all that heavenly host joined in the ascription which was raised, "Worthy is the Lamb that was *slain*, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Fitting assemblage for such a place! Fitting song of adoration to be raised to Him who by the shedding of his blood became a ransom for many, and who, as our great High Priest, still pleads its merits in the sanctuary above in our behalf. And here, before such an august assemblage, must our characters soon come up in final review. What shall fit us for the searching ordeal? And what shall enable us to rise and stand at last with the sinless throng above? Oh, infinite merit of the blood of Christ! which can cleanse us from all our pollutions, and make us meet to tread the holy hill of Zion! Oh, infinite grace of God! which can prepare us to endure the glory, and give us boldness to enter into his presence, even with exceeding joy.

VERSE 13. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. 14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever.

A Clean Universe. In verse 13 we have an in-

stance of what very frequently occurs in the Scriptures, namely, a declaration thrown in out of its chronological order, for the purpose of following out to its completion some previous statement or allusion. In this instance the time is anticipated when redemption is finished. In verse 10, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders had declared, "We shall reign on the earth." Now the prophet's mind is caught right forward to that time. The greatest act of Christ's intervention for man, the shedding of his blood having been introduced, nothing could be more natural than that the vision should, for a moment, look over to the time when the grand result of the work then introduced, should be accomplished, the number of the redeemed be made up, the universe be freed from sin and sinners, and a universal song of adoration go up to God and the Lamb.

It is futile to attempt to apply this to the church in its present state, as most commentators do, or to any time in the past since sin entered the world, or even since Satan fell from his high position as an angel of light and love in Heaven. For at the time of which John speaks, *every creature* in Heaven and on earth, without any exception, was sending up its anthem of blessings to God. But to speak only of this world since the fall, cursings instead of blessings have been breathed out against God and his throne, from the great majority of our apostate race. And so it will ever be while sin reigns.

We find, then, no place for this scene which John describes, unless we do go forward, according to the

position above taken, to the time when the whole scheme of redemption is completed, and the saints enter upon their promised reign on the earth, to which the living creatures and elders looked forward in their song in verse 10. With this view, all is harmonious and plain. That reign on the earth commences after the second resurrection. Dan 7: 27; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1. At that resurrection, which takes place a thousand years subsequently to the first resurrection, Rev. 20:4, 5, occurs the perdition of ungodly men. 2 Pet. 3:7. Then fire comes down from God out of Heaven and devours them. Rev. 20:9; and this fire that causes the perdition of ungodly men, is the fire that melts and purifies the earth, as we learn from 2 Pet. 3:7–13. Then sin and sinners are destroyed, the earth is purified, the curse with all its ills is forever wiped away, the righteous "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," and from a clean universe, an anthem of praise and thanksgiving ascends to God. In all the fair domain of the great Creator, there is then no room for a vast receptacle of fire and brimstone, where myriads, preserved by the direct power of a God of mercy, shall burn and writhe in unspeakable and eternal torment. In this glad anthem of jubilee there is no room for the discordant and hopeless wailings of the damned, and the curses and blasphemies of those who are sinning and suffering beyond the pale of hope. Every rebel voice has been hushed in death. They have been burned up root and branch, Satan

and all his followers, deceiver and deceived. Mal. 4:1; Heb. 2:14. Into smoke have they consumed away. Ps. 37:20. Like the perishable chaff have they vanished in the flames. Matt. 3:12. They have been annihilated, not as matter, but as conscious and intelligent beings; for they have become as though they had not been. Obad. 16.

To the Lamb, equally with the Father who sits upon the throne, praise is ascribed in this song of adoration. Commentators, with great unanimity, have seized upon this as proof that Christ must be co-existent with the Father; for otherwise, say they, here would be worship paid to the creature which belongs only to the Creator. How does it prove this? We read that Christ is the beginning of the creation of God, Rev. 3:14, where see note, and that all subsequent creations of conscious intelligences or inanimate things, were made through him. John 1:3; Heb. 1:2. The word "by" in both these instances is from the Greek διὰ. To all beings, therefore, of a lower order than himself, Christ holds the relation of joint-creator. Could not the Father ordain that to such a being, worship should be rendered equally with himself, without its being idolatry on the part of the worshiper? He has raised him to positions which make it proper that he should be worshipped, and has even commanded that it should be done; neither of which acts would have been necessary, had he been equal with the Father in eternity of existence. Christ himself declares that "as the Father hath life

in himself, so hath *he given* to the Son to have life in himself." John 5:26. On another occasion he says, All power *is given* unto me in Heaven and in earth. Matt. 28:18. Paul declares of Christ that the Father has highly exalted him and *given* him a name above every name. Phil. 2:9. And the Father himself says, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Heb 1:6. These testimonies show that Christ is now an object of worship equally with the Father; but they do not prove that with him he holds an eternity of past existence.

Coming back from the glorious scene anticipated in verse 13, to events transpiring in the Heavenly sanctuary before him, the prophet hears the four living creatures exclaim, Amen. Their exclamation thus comes in as a response to what is said in verses 12 and 13. And the four and twenty elders then fell down and worshipped Him that liveth forever and ever.

Chapter VI.

THE SEVEN SEALS.

Verse 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2. And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Having taken the book, the Lamb proceeds at once to open the seals; and the attention of the apostle is called to the scenes that transpire under each seal. The number seven has already been noticed as denoting in the Scriptures completion and perfection. The seven seals, therefore, embrace the whole of a certain class of events, reaching down to the close of probationary time. Hence to say, as some do, that the seals denote a series of events, reaching down perhaps to the time of Constantine, and the seven trumpets another series from that time further on, cannot be correct. The trumpets denote a series of events which transpire contemporaneously with the events of the seals, but of an entirely different character. A trumpet is a symbol of war. Hence the trumpets denote great political commotions to take place

among the nations during the gospel age. The seals denote events of a religious character, and contain the history of the church from the opening of the Christian era to the coming of Christ.

Commentators have raised a question concerning the manner in which these scenes were represented before the apostle. Was it merely a written description of the events, which was read to him as each successive seal was opened? or was it a pictorial illustration of the events which the book contained, and which was presented before him as the seals were broken? or was it a scenic representation which passed before him, the different actors coming forth and performing their parts? Barnes decides in favor of calling them pictorial illustrations. For he thinks a merely written description would not answer to the language of the apostle, setting forth what he saw; and a mere scenic representation could have no connection with the opening of the seals. But to this view of Barnes' there are at least two serious objections: 1. The book was said to contain only *writing* within, not pictorial illustrations; and 2. John saw the characters which made up the various scenes, not fixed and motionless upon canvass, but living and moving, and engaging actively in the parts assigned them. The view which seems most consistent to us, is, that the book contained a record of events which were to transpire; and when the seals were broken and the record was brought to light, the scenes were presented before John, not by the de-

scription being read, but by a representation of what was described in the book, being made to pass before his mind in living characters, in the place where the reality was to transpire, namely, on the earth.

The first symbol, a white horse, and the rider who bears a bow and to whom a crown is given, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer, is a fit emblem of the triumphs of the gospel in the first century of this dispensation; the whiteness of the horse denoting the purity of faith in that age, and the crown which was given to the rider, and his going forth conquering and to make still further conquests, the zeal and success with which the truth was promulgated by its earliest ministers. To this it is objected that the ministers of Christ and the progress of the gospel could not be properly represented by such warlike symbols. But we ask, By what symbols could the work of Christianity better be represented when it went forth as an aggressive principle against the huge systems of error with which it had at first to contend? The rider upon this horse went forth. Where? His commission was unlimited. The gospel was to all the world.

VERSE 3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

Perhaps the first noticeable feature in these symbols, is the contrast in the color of the horses. This is doubtless designed to be significant. If the whiteness of the first horse denoted the purity of the gospel in the period which that symbol covers, the redness of the second horse would denote that in this period that original purity began to be corrupted. The mystery of iniquity already worked in Paul's day; and the professed church of Christ, it would seem, was now so far corrupted by it as to require this change in the color of the symbol. Errors began to arise. Worldliness came in. The ecclesiastical power sought the alliance of the secular. Troubles and commotions were the result. The spirit of this period perhaps reached its climax as we come down to the days of Constantine, the first so-called Christian Emperor, whose conversion to Christianity is dated by Mosheim in A. D. 323.

Of this period Dr. Rice remarks: "It represents a secular period or union of church and State. Constantine aided the clergy and put them under obligations to him. He legislated for the church, called the Council of Nicæa, and was most prominent in that Council. Constantine, not the gospel, had the glory of tearing down the heathen temples. The State had the glory instead of the church. Constantine made decrees against some errors, and was praised, and suffered to go on and introduce many other errors, and oppose some important truths. Controversies arose, and when a new emperor took the throne, there was a rush of the

clergy to get him on the side of their peculiar tenets. Mosheim says of this period, 'There was continual war and trouble.'"

This state of things answers well to the declaration of the prophet, that power was given to him that sat on the horse "to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword." The Christianity of that time had mounted the throne, and bore the emblem of the civil power.

VERSE 5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

How rapidly the work of corruption progresses! What a contrast between this symbol and the first one! A black horse; the very opposite of the first. A period of great darkness and moral corruption in the church must be denoted by this symbol. By the events of the second seal, the way was fully opened for that state of things to be brought about which is here presented. The time that intervened between the reign of Constantine and the establishment of the papacy in A. D. 538, may be justly noted as the time when the darkest errors and grossest superstitions sprung up in the church. Of a period immediately succeeding the days of Constantine, Mosheim says:—

"Those vain fictions which an attachment to the Platonic philosophy, and to popular opinions, had engaged the greatest part of the Christian doctors to adopt, before the time of Constantine, were now confirmed, enlarged, and embellished in various ways. Hence arose that extravagant veneration for departed saints, and those absurd notions of a certain fire destined to purify separate souls, that now prevailed, and of which the public marks were everywhere to be seen. Hence also the celibacy of priests, the worship of images and relics, which, in process of time, almost utterly destroyed the Christian religion, or at least eclipsed its luster, and corrupted its very essence in the most deplorable manner. An enormous train of superstitions was gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution proceeded from a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity. Accordingly, frequent pilgrimages were undertaken to Palestine, and to the tombs of the martyrs, as if there alone the sacred principles of virtue, and the certain hope of salvation, were to be acquired. The reins being once let loose to superstition which knows no bounds, absurd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied almost every day. Quantities of dust and earth brought from

Palestine, and other places remarkable for their supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most powerful remedies against the violence of wicked spirits, and were sold and bought everywhere at enormous prices. The public processions and supplications by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated in many places with great pomp and magnificence. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel, or, rather, under that cloud of superstition which was obscuring its glory. It is true that, as yet, images were not very common; nor were there any statues at all. But it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the martyrs was modeled, by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ.

"From these facts, which are but small specimens of the state of Christianity at this time, the discerning reader will easily perceive what detriment the church received from the peace and prosperity procured by Constantine, and from the imprudent methods employed to allure the different nations to embrace the gospel. The brevity we have proposed to

observe in this history prevents our entering into an ample detail of the dismal effects that arose from the progress and the baneful influence of superstition, which had now become universal."

Again he says, "A whole volume would be requisite to contain an enumeration of the various frauds which artful knaves practiced, with success, to delude the ignorant, when true religion was almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition."—*Eccl. Hist. 4th Cent., part ii., chap. 3.*

This extract from Mosheim contains a description of the period covered by the black horse of the third seal that answers accurately to the prophecy. It is seen by this how paganism was incorporated into Christianity, and how, during this period, the false system which resulted in the establishment of the papacy, rapidly rounded out to its full outlines, and ripened into all its deplorable perfection of strength and stature.

The Balances. "The balances denoted that religion and civil power would be united in the person who would administer the executive power in the government, and that he would claim the judicial authority both in church and State. This was true among the Roman emperors from the days of Constantine until the reign of Justinian, when he gave the same judicial power to the bishop of Rome."—*Miller's Lectures*, p. 181.

The Wheat and Barley. "The measures of wheat and barley for a penny denote that the members of the church would be eagerly engaged after worldly

goods, and the love of money would be the prevailing spirit of the times; for they would dispose of anything for money."—*Id.*

The Oil and Wine. These "denote the graces of the Spirit, faith and love, and there was great danger of hurting these, under the influence of so much worldly spirit. And it is well attested by all historians that the prosperity of the church in this age produced the corruptions which finally terminated in the falling away, and setting up the Antichristian abominations."—*Id.*

It will be observed that the voice limiting the amount of wheat for a penny, and saying, "Hurt not the oil and the wine," is not spoken by any one on earth, but comes from the midst of the four living creatures; signifying that, though the under shepherds, the professed ministers of Christ on earth, had no care for the flock, yet the Lord was not unmindful of them in this period of darkness. A voice comes from Heaven. He takes care that the spirit of worldliness does not prevail to such a degree that Christianity should be entirely lost, or that the oil and the wine, the graces of genuine piety, should entirely perish from the earth.

VERSE 7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The color of this horse is remarkable. The colors of the white, red, and black horses, mentioned in the preceding verses, are natural; but a pale color is unnatural. The original word denotes the "pale or yellowish color" that is seen in blighted or sickly plants. A strange state of things in the professed church must be denoted by this symbol. The rider on this horse is named Death; and Hell (ἅδης, the grave) follows with him. The mortality is so great during this period that it would seem as if "the pale nations of the dead" had come upon earth, and were following in the wake of this desolating power. The period during which this seal applies can hardly be mistaken. It must refer to the time in which the papacy bore its unrebuked, unrestrained, and persecuting rule, commencing about A. D. 538, and extending to the time when the reformers commenced their work of exposing the corruptions of the papal system.

"And power was given unto them"—*him*, says the margin; that is, the power personified by Death on the pale horse; namely, the papacy. By the fourth part of the earth is doubtless meant the territory over which this power had jurisdiction; while the terms, sword, hunger, death (that is, some infliction which causes death, as exposure, torture, etc.), and beasts of the earth, are figures denoting the means by which it has put to death its martyrs, fifty millions of whom, according to the lowest estimate, call for vengeance from beneath its bloody altar.

VERSE 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; 10; And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The events set forth as transpiring under the fifth seal, are, the crying of the martyrs for vengeance, and the giving to them of white robes. The questions that at once suggest themselves for solution are, Does this seal cover a period of time? and if so, what period? Where is the altar under which those souls were seen? What are these souls? and what is their condition? What is meant by their cry for vengeance? What is meant by white robes being given to them? When do they rest for a little season? and, What is signified by their brethren being killed as they were? To all these questions, we believe a satisfactory answer can be returned.

1. *The Fifth Seal Covers a Period of Time.* It seems consistent that this seal, like all the others, should cover a period of time; and the date of its application cannot be mistaken, if the preceding seals have been rightly located. Following the period of the papal persecution, the time covered by this seal would commence when the Reformation began to undermine the Antichristian papal fabric,

and restrain the persecuting power of the Romish church.

2. *The Altar.* This cannot denote any altar in Heaven; as it is evidently the place where these victims had been slain, the altar of sacrifice. On this point, Dr. A. Clarke says: "A symbolical vision was exhibited in which he saw an altar. And under it the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God—martyred for their attachment to Christianity, are represented as being newly slain as victims to idolatry and superstition. *The altar is upon earth, not in Heaven.*" A confirmation of this view is found in the fact that John is beholding scenes upon the earth. The souls are represented under the altar, just as victims slain upon it would pour out their blood beneath it, and fall by its side.

3. *The Souls under the Altar.* This representation is popularly regarded as a strong proof of the doctrine of the disembodied and conscious state of the dead. Here, it is claimed, are souls seen by John in a disembodied state; and they were conscious, and had knowledge of passing events; for they cried for vengeance on their persecutors. This view of the passage is inadmissible, for several reasons: 1. The popular view places these souls in Heaven; but the altar of sacrifice on which they were slain, and beneath which they were seen, cannot be there. The only altar we read of in Heaven is the altar of incense; but it would not be correct to represent victims just slain as under the altar of incense, as that altar was never devoted to such a use. 2. It would

be repugnant to all our ideas of the heavenly state, to represent souls in Heaven *shut up* under an altar. 3. Can we suppose that the idea of *vengeance* would reign so supreme in the minds of souls in Heaven as to render them, despite the joy and glory of that ineffable state, dissatisfied and uneasy till vengeance was inflicted upon their enemies? Would they not rather rejoice that persecution raised its hand against them, and thus hastened them into the presence of their Redeemer, at whose right hand there is fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore? But, further, the popular view which puts these souls in Heaven, puts the wicked at the same time in the lake of fire, writhing in unutterable torment, and in *full view* of the heavenly host. This, it is claimed, is proved by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Now these souls, brought to view under the fifth seal, were those who had been slain under the preceding seal, scores of years, and most of them centuries, before. Beyond any question, their persecutors had all passed off the stage of action, and according to the view under consideration, were suffering all the torments of hell right before their eyes. Yet, as if not satisfied with this, they cry to God, as though he was delaying vengeance on their murderers. What greater vengeance could they want? Or, if their persecutors were still on the earth, they must know that they would, in a few years at most, join the vast multitude daily pouring through the gate of death into the world of woe. Their amiability is put in no better light even by this supposition. One

thing, at least, is evident: The popular theory concerning the condition of the dead, righteous and wicked, cannot be correct, or the interpretation usually given to this passage is not correct; for they devour each other.

But it is urged that these souls must be conscious; for they cry to God. This argument would be of weight were there no such figure of speech as personification. But while there is, it will be proper, on certain conditions, to attribute life, action, and intelligence, to inanimate objects. Thus the blood of Abel is said to have cried to God from the ground. Gen. 4:9, 10. The stone cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answered it. Hab. 2:11. The hire of the laborers kept back by fraud cried, and the cry entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Jas. 5:4. So the souls mentioned in our text could cry, and not thereby be proved to be conscious.

The incongruity of the popular view on this verse is so apparent that Albert Barnes makes the following concession: "We are not to suppose that this *literally* occurred, and that John actually saw the souls of the martyrs beneath the altars—for the whole representation is symbolical; nor are we to suppose that the injured and the wronged in Heaven actually pray for vengeance on those who wronged them, or that the redeemed in Heaven will continue to pray with reference to things on earth; but it may be fairly inferred from this that there will be *as real* a remembrance of the wrongs of the

persecuted, the injured, and the oppressed, *as if* such a prayer was offered there; and that the oppressor has as much to dread from the divine vengeance *as if* those whom he has injured should cry in Heaven to the God who hears prayer, and who takes vengeance."—*Notes on Rev. 6.*

On such passages as this, the reader is misled by the popular definition of the word soul. From that definition, he is led to suppose that this text speaks of an immaterial, invisible, immortal essence in man, which soars into its coveted freedom on the death of its hindrance and clog, the mortal body. No instance of the occurrence of the word in the original Hebrew or Greek will sustain such a definition. It oftenest means life; and is not unfrequently rendered person. It applies to the dead as well as to the living, as may be seen by reference to Gen. 2: 7, where the word "living" need not have been expressed were life an inseparable attribute of the soul; and to Num. 19: 13, where the Hebrew Concordance reads, "Dead soul." Moreover these souls pray that their *blood* may be avenged, an article which the immaterial soul, as popularly understood, is not supposed to possess. We regard the word souls as here meaning simply the martyrs, those who had been slain, the words "souls of them" being a periphrasis for the whole person. They were represented to John as having been slain upon the altar of papal sacrifice, on this earth, and lying dead beneath it. They certainly were not alive when John saw them under the fifth seal; for he

again brings to view the same company, in almost the same language, and assures us that the first time they live after their martyrdom is at the resurrection of the just. Rev. 20: 4–6. Lying there, victims of papal blood-thirstiness and oppression, they cried to God for vengeance, in the same manner that Abel's blood cried to him from the ground.

The White Robes. These were given as a partial answer to their cry, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?" How was it? They had gone down to the grave in the most ignominious manner. Their lives had been misrepresented, their reputations tarnished, their names defamed, their motives maligned, and their graves covered with shame and reproach, as containing the dishonored dust of the most vile and despicable characters. Thus the church of Rome, which then molded the sentiment of the principal nations of the earth, spared no pains to make her victims an abhorring unto all flesh.

But the Reformation begins to work. It begins to be seen that the church is the corrupt and disreputable party, and those against whom it vents its rage are the good, the pure, and the true. The work goes on among the most enlightened nations, the reputation of the church going down, and that of the martyrs coming up, until the corruptions of the papal abominations are fully exposed, and that huge system of iniquity stands forth before the world in all its naked deformity; while the martyrs are vindicated from all the aspersions under

which that Antichristian church had sought to bury them. Then it was seen that they had suffered, not for being vile and criminal, but "for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Then their praises were sung, their virtues admired, their fortitude applauded, their names honored, and their memories cherished. White robes were thus given unto every one of them.

The Little Season. The cruel work of Romanism did not instantly cease as the light of the Reformation began to dawn. Not a few terrible outbursts of Romish hate and persecution were yet to be felt by the church. Multitudes more were to be punished as heretics and join the great army of martyrs. The full vindication of their cause was to be delayed a little season. And during this time, Rome added hundreds of thousands to the vast throng of whose blood she had already become guilty. See Buck's Theological Dictionary, Art. Persecution. But the spirit of persecution was finally restrained; the cause of the martyrs was vindicated; and the little season of the fifth seal came to a close.

VERSE 12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief

captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17; For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Such are the solemn and sublime scenes that transpire under the sixth seal. And a thought well calculated to awaken in every heart an intense interest in divine things, is the consideration that we are now living amid the momentous events of this seal.

Between the fifth and sixth seals there seems to be a sudden and entire change in the language, from the highly figurative to the strictly literal. Whatever may be the cause of this change, the change itself cannot well be denied. By no principle of interpretation can the language of the preceding seals be made to be literal; nor can the language of this any more easily be made to be figurative. We must therefore accept the change, even though we should be unable to explain it. There is a great fact, however, to which we would here call attention. It was to be in the period covered by this seal that the prophetic portions of God's word were to be unsealed, and many run to and fro, or "give their sedulous attention to the understanding of these things," and thereby knowledge on this part of God's word to be greatly increased. And we suggest that it may be for this

reason that the change in the language here occurs, and that the events of this seal, transpiring at a time when these things were to be fully understood, are couched in no figures, but laid before us in plain and unmistakable language.

The Great Earthquake. The first event under this seal, perhaps the one which marks its opening, is a great earthquake. As the more probable fulfillment of this prediction, we refer to the great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755. Of this earthquake, Sears, in his "Wonders of the World," pp. 50, 58, 381, says:—

"The great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, extended over a tract of at least 4,000,000 of square miles. Its effects were even extended to the waters in many places where the shocks were not perceptible. It pervaded the greater portion of Europe, Africa, and America; but its extreme violence was exercised on the south-western part of the former. In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed. Many houses were thrown down at Fay and Mequinez, and multitudes were buried beneath the ruins. Similar effects were realized at Morocco. Its effects were likewise felt at Tangiers, at Tetuan, at Funchal in the island of Madeira. It is probable that all Africa was shaken. At the north, it extended to Norway and Sweden. Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland, were all more or less agitated by the same great commotion of the elements. Lisbon (Portugal),

previous to the earthquake in 1755, contained 150,000 inhabitants. Mr. Barretti says that 90,000 persons are supposed to have been lost on that fatal day."

On page 200 of the same work, we again read: "The terror of the people was beyond description. Nobody wept—it was beyond tears—they ran hither and thither, delirious with horror and astonishment, beating their faces and breasts, crying, '*Misericordia*—the *world's at an end!*' Mothers forgot their children, and ran about loaded with crucifixed images. Unfortunately many ran to the churches for protection; but in vain was the sacrament exposed; in vain did the poor creatures embrace the altars; images, priests, and people, were buried in one common ruin."

The Encyclopedia Americana states that this earthquake extended also to Greenland, and of its effects upon the city of Lisbon, further says: "The city then contained about 150,000 inhabitants. The shock was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large and public buildings, and more than one-fourth of the houses. In about two hours after the shock, fires broke out in different quarters, and raged with such violence for the space of nearly three days, that the city was completely desolated. The earthquake happened on a holy day, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped."

If the reader will look on his atlas at the coun-

tries above mentioned, he will see how large a portion of the earth's surface was agitated by this awful convulsion. Other earthquakes may have been as severe in particular localities; but no other one combining so great an extent with such a degree of severity, has ever been felt on this earth, of which we have any record.

The Darkening of the Sun. Following the earthquake, it is announced that "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." This portion of the prediction has also been fulfilled. Into a detailed account of the wonderful darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780, we need not here enter. Most persons of general reading, it is presumed, have seen some account of it; besides, many are living who have no need of the written description, having been eye-witnesses of the extraordinary scene. The following detached declarations from different testimonies will give an idea of its nature.

"In the month of May, 1780, there was a terrific dark day in New England, when 'all faces seemed to gather blackness,' and the people were filled with fear. There was great distress in the village where Edward Lee lived; 'men's hearts failing them for fear' that the Judgment day was at hand; and the neighbors all flocked around the holy man," who "spent the gloomy hours in earnest prayer for the distressed multitude."—*Tract No. 379, Am. Tract Society—Life of Edward Lee.*

"Candles were lighted in many houses. Birds were silent and disappeared. Fowls retired to

roost. It was the general opinion that the day of Judgment was at hand."—*Pres. Dwight in Ct. Historical Collections.*

"The darkness was such as to occasion farmers to leave their work in the field, and retire to their dwellings. Lights became necessary to the transaction of business within doors. The darkness continued through the day."—*Gage's History of Rowley, Mass.*

"The cocks crew as at daybreak, and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night. The alarm produced by this unusual aspect of the heavens was very great."—*Portsmouth Journal, May 20, 1843.*

"It was midnight darkness at noon-day. . . . . Thousands of people who could not account for it from natural causes, were greatly terrified; and, indeed, it cast a universal gloom on the earth. The frogs and night-hawks began their notes."—*Dr. Adams.*

"Similar days have occasionally been known, though inferior in the degree or extent of their darkness. The causes of these phenomena are unknown. They certainly were not the result of eclipses."—*Sears' Guide to Knowledge.*

The Moon Became as Blood. The darkness of the following night, May 19, 1780, was as unnatural as that of the day had been.

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light. I could not

help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."—*Mr. Tenny of Exeter, N. H., quoted by Mr. Gage to the "Historical Society."*

And whenever on this memorable night the moon did appear, as at certain times it did, it had, according to this prophecy, the appearance of blood.

And the Stars of Heaven Fell. The voice of history still is, *Fulfilled!* Being a much later event than the darkening of the sun, there are multitudes in whose memories it is as fresh as though it were but yesterday. We refer to the great meteoric shower of Nov. 13, 1833. On this point one extract will suffice.

"At the cry, 'Look out of the window,' I sprang from a deep sleep, and with wonder saw the east lighted up with the dawn and meteors. . . . . I called to my wife to behold; and, while robing, she exclaimed, 'See how the stars fall!' I replied, 'That is the wonder;' and we felt in our hearts that it was a sign of the last days. For truly 'the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Rev. 6:13. This language of the prophet has always been received as metaphorical. Yesterday, it was literally fulfilled. The ancients understood by *aster* in Greek and *stella* in

Latin, the smaller lights of heaven. The refinement of modern astronomy has made distinction between stars of heaven and meteors of heaven. Therefore, the idea of the prophet, as it is expressed in the original Greek, was literally fulfilled in the phenomenon of yesterday, so as no man before yesterday had conceived to be possible that it should be fulfilled. The immense size and distance of the planets and fixed stars forbid the idea of their falling *unto the earth.* Larger bodies cannot fall in myriads unto a smaller body; but most of the planets and all the fixed stars are many times larger than our earth; but these fell toward the earth. And how did they fall? Neither myself nor one of the family heard any report; and were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt, to illustrate the appearance of the heavens, as that which St. John uses in the prophecy before quoted: 'The stars of heaven fell unto the earth.' They were not sheets, or flakes, or drops, of fire; but they were what the world understands by falling stars; and one speaking to his fellow, in the midst of the scene, would say, 'See how the stars fall!' And he who heard would not stop to correct the astronomy of the speaker, any more than he would reply, 'The sun does not move,' to one who should tell him, 'The sun is rising.' The stars fell 'even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Here is the exactness of the prophet. The falling stars did not come as if from several trees

shaken, but from *one*. Those which appeared in the east, fell toward the east; those which appeared in the north, fell toward the north; those which appeared in the west, fell toward the west; and those which appeared in the south (for I went out of my residence into the Park), fell toward the south. And they fell not as *ripe* fruit falls; far from it; but they flew, they were *cast*, like the unripe, which at first refuses to leave the branch, and when, under a violent pressure, it does break its hold, it flies swiftly, straight off, descending; and in the multitude falling, some cross the track of others, as they are thrown with more or less force, but each one falls on its own side of the tree."—*Henry Dana Ward.*

These signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are the same as those so strikingly predicted by our Lord and recorded by the evangelists, Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. In these records not only the same signs are given, but the same time is pointed out for their fulfillment; namely, a period commencing just this side of the long and bloody persecution of the papal power. In Matt. 24:21, 22, the 1260 years of papal supremacy are brought to view; and "immediately after the tribulation of those days," verse 29, the sun was to be darkened, etc. Mark is still more definite and says, "*In* those days, *after* that tribulation." The days, commencing in A. D. 538, ended in 1798; but before they ended, the spirit of persecution had been restrained by the Reformation, and that tribulation of the

church had ceased. And right in this period, exactly at the time specified in the prophecy, the fulfillment of these signs commenced in the darkening of the sun and moon.

The first instance of the falling of the stars, worthy of any notice, though others of local and minor importance may be mentioned before it, took place in 1799. To the great display of 1833, by far the most brilliant of any on record, we have already referred. Of the extent of this shower, Prof. Olmstead, of Yale College, a distinguished meteorologist, says, "The extent of the shower of 1833, was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth's surface; from the middle of the Atlantic on the east, to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America, to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance." From this, it appears that this exhibition was confined exclusively to the western world. But in the year 1866, another remarkable occurrence of this kind took place, this time in the East, nearly as magnificent in some places as that of 1833, and visible, so far as ascertained, throughout the greater part of Europe. Thus the principal portions of the earth have now been warned by this sign.

Observation has shown that these meteoric displays occur at regular intervals of about thirty-three years. The skeptic will doubtless seize upon this as a pretext for throwing them out of the cat-

alogue of signs. But if they are not more than ordinary occurrences, the question is to be answered why they have not occurred as regularly and prominently centuries in the past as in the last hundred years. This is a question science cannot answer; nor can it offer anything more than conjecture as to their cause.

One significant fact will be noticed in connection with all the foregoing signs: They were each instinctively associated in the minds of the people, at the time of their occurrence, with the great day of which they were the forerunners. And on each occasion the cry was raised, "The Judgment has come," "The world's at an end."

But the objector answers, These phenomena in the sun, moon and stars cannot be signs of the end; because there have been many instances of such occurrences; and pointing to some ten other periods of remarkable darkness, besides that of 1780, and to several occurrences of falling stars, or meteoric showers, he asks with an air of triumph which one we will take for the sign. That this is not a fanciful representation of the objection the following facts will demonstrate:—

In 1878 we noticed in one of the leading dailies of Chicago a question from a correspondent in Vermont, and the reply given by the paper, as follows:—

"Will you give the causes (and proof) of the 'dark day' in 1780, the 19th of May, I believe. An 'Advent preacher' has been preaching in this

neighborhood, and alluded to it as a sign of the destruction of the world."

And the reply is given thus:—

"The dark day of 1780 was produced by entirely natural causes, and was about as much a sign of the destruction of the world as of the advent of the potato-beetle. The darkness, said Dr. Samuel Tenney, of Exeter, N. H., was produced by common clouds. Between these common clouds and the earth intervened another stratum of great thickness. As the stratum advanced, the darkness commenced and increased with its progress. The uncommon thickness of this stratum was occasioned by two strong currents of wind from the southward and westward, condensing the vapors and drawing them in a northwest direction. The density of this stratum was owing to the vapor and smoke it contained. These so-called dark days have not been uncommon, being known in 366 B. C.; 295 B. C.; 252 A. D.; 746, 775, 1732, 1762, 1780, 1783, 1807, 1816. The one was as prophetic as any other and no more so."

It would have been a little more to the satisfaction of any one who wishes to know the reasons of his faith, if the writer of the reply had stated where he found his evidence for all his assertions. And we would like a little light on such points as this: From what came that "stratum of great thickness"? Of what was it composed? How was it formed? This fellow's explanation amounts to just this: It was dark because there was great darkness. He simply states the fact in another form, and calls

that an explanation. His own statement needs explaining as really as the one to which he refers. "The uncommon thickness of the stratum was caused by two strong currents of wind," etc. How did those winds chance to come just then, and just when there were vapors to condense? And what caused the vapors? Then how could currents from the west and south draw the vapors in a *north-west* direction? Common philosophy would assign them, under such circumstances, a *north-east* direction. Our friend must be careful or he will make the dark day to be a greater phenomenon than we have ever claimed.

But, further, we would ask how, according to the reply above given, the words of our Lord can ever be fulfilled. He says that the sun *shall be darkened;* and he means the literal sun; for he speaks of men and things on the earth in contrast with it; Luke 21:25; and he says that when it is thus darkened it is a sign of the end; for when we see these things come to pass, he tells us that we are to *know* that he is near, even at the doors. But according to the writer of the foregoing, there never can be any sign of this nature. He declares there never has been in the past; and suppose such a phenomenon should occur again; would it be a sign? Not in his eyes; for the hypothesis of vapors, winds, natural laws, and common occurrences, would instantly fly to his scoffing lips. But something of this kind is to constitute a sign; for the Lord himself has declared it; and we would like to ask the objector how a dark-

ening of the sun should differ from that of 1780, to answer to the prophecy and constitute a sign?

But, it is urged, there have been many such events, hence it can be no sign; and seven dark days are mentioned by our writer before 1780, and three since, for which, however, he forgot to give his authority. But how does it happen that nobody has seemed to pay any attention to these days, or make any account of them? and why is it that all fix upon May 19, 1780, as the only one worthy of special note, giving it by way of distinction, the title, *The* Dark Day?

The answer is obvious. It occupies a pre-eminent position in this respect. It towers up far above all others as the one alone remarkable and noteworthy for its awful phenomena.

But we are not left to decide the matter from this evidence alone; for our Lord has not only told us that such an event should occur as a sign of his coming, but he has told us also *when* it should occur. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," says Matthew. Mark is more definite and says, "*In* those days *after* that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened," etc. Mark 13: 24. The "days" are the days of papal supremacy, the 1260 years from 538 to 1798; the tribulation is the oppression of Christians by the Catholic power till restrained by the work of the Reformation. The tribulation may be said to have ceased about the middle of the 18th century. The "days" ended within two years of the close of that century. Thus by the fixed

terms of the prophecy we are shut up to a period of about fifty years in length, and ending in 1798, in which to look for that darkening of the sun which was to be a sign of the Lord's soon coming.

Again, the darkening of the sun was to be the second great event to take place under the sixth seal. Rev. 6 : 12. The first and the one which marked the opening of that seal, was a great earthquake, shown to be, by comparison with the preceding seals, the great earthquake of Lisbon, Nov. 1, 1755. Between this point and the end of the papal period in 1798, the sun was to be darkened as a sign of the end. Here we are shut up to a period of time positively only forty-three years in length, in which to look for that darkening of the sun which was the subject of the prediction. Now it matters not if our opponents should claim seven thousand dark days instead of seven, as notable as the one of 1780, it would not affect the prediction or the sign in the least degree. It matters not how many nor what kind of dark days there may have been in other ages, we look for one which was to take place in that brief, specified period as the predicted sign.

We fix our eyes upon that time, and what do we behold? We find not only the darkening of the sun, as foretold, but we find a dark day so much more notable than all others, that it is set forth by way of pre-eminence as "*the* dark day," while in general history all others are passed by in silence.

From one point it is very strange that people can

overlook considerations of this nature which are so decisive upon this question. From another, it is not. What a man does n't want to see he can very easily keep from seeing. But the lack both of inclination and ability we apprehend is accounted for by the prophet Daniel, when he says, "the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand."

Of the dark day, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, editions of 1869 and 1870, page 1556, says:—

"Dark Day, The. May 19, 1780;—so-called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with different degrees of duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the south-west and the north-east. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

While the learned editor of Webster's Dictionary testifies so positively that "the true cause of the phenomenon *is not known*," it is remarkable how flippantly many smaller minds proceed to offer their explanations, and account for it from natural causes. Those who lived at the time, and had at least as

good an opportunity to mark all its strange features and unnatural manifestations as people of the present time, were filled with awe at the occurrence, and for years, so long as the memory of it lasted, were unable to explain it; but their degenerate sons, the wondrously wise generation of the present, living over a hundred years from the time of its occurrence, and having never seen anything of the kind, assume to explain it with all the nonchalance with which they would tell us that two and two make four.

As the time when we were to look for the beginning of the signs is so definitely located, it is further objected that the falling of the stars in 1833 cannot be one of the signs, because, according to Mark 13:24, 25, they also should have fallen within those days, or previous to 1798, as this event is immediately connected by the word "and" to the signs in the sun and moon.

We reply by calling attention to the fact that there are more events than simply the falling of the stars that are linked to the series by the word "and." Thus, "And" the stars of heaven shall fall, "and" the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken, "and" then shall they see the Son of man coming, "and" then shall he send his angels to gather the elect. Now the language certainly is not designed to convey the idea that all these things were to take place within those days; for, in that case, we should have the coming of Christ itself take place before the days ended. Verse 29,

stating the conclusion of the argument, says, "So ye in like manner when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh even at the doors." Matthew puts it in still stronger language, when he says, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [margin, he, Christ] is near, even at the doors." But it would be absurd to say that we must wait till the coming of Christ takes place before we can know that it is near, even at the doors.

These facts, then, plainly appear: That a series of associated events is given us, covering quite a period of time, beginning at some point in the past, and reaching down to, and including, the second coming of Christ. The beginning of the series is placed at a point before the close of a certain prophetic period designated as "those days," namely, the 1260 years of papal oppression upon the church; but the end of the series lies far outside of that period, as already shown. Now, the question to be decided is, How many events of the series given us are to be looked for before the date by which "those days" are limited, that is, before 1798, where the 1260 days, or years, terminated? The only data we have upon which to frame an answer are the facts already noticed; namely, that the events begin within that period, but close outside of it; and no specified number is given as belonging to that period.

The conclusion is therefore inevitable that if the first one of the events designated comes to pass

within the specified time, the prophecy is fulfilled, though all the others lie outside of that time. Had the sun alone been darkened before 1798, it would have been sufficient to fulfill the prophecy. The moon, even, might have been darkened this side of 1798 without vitiating the prophecy in the least degree. The sun and moon were darkened together in 1780, eighteen years before the days ended; the stars fell in 1833, thirty-five years after the end of the days. We have reached the year 1880, eighty-two years this side the ending of the days, and the shaking of the powers of heaven is yet future, but not far distant, as other prophecies show; and in immediate connection with that, as Joel and John plainly declare, the coming of the Lord is to take place.

If the objector still insists that according to our application the stars should have fallen before 1798, because it says, "*And* the stars of heaven shall fall," we reply that then all the other events should also have taken place before 1798; for they are connected in the same way. But this we have shown to be absurd.

And the Heaven Departed as a Scroll. In this event our minds are turned to the future. From looking at the past and beholding the word of God fulfilled, we are now called to look at events before us, which are no less sure to come. Here is our position unmistakably defined. We stand between the 13th and 14th verses of this chapter. We wait for the heavens to depart as a scroll when

it is rolled together. And these are times of unparalleled solemnity and importance; for how near we may be to the fulfillment of these things we know not.

This departing of the heaven as a scroll is what the evangelists call in the same series of events, the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Other scriptures give us further particulars concerning this prediction. From Heb. 12:25–27, Joel 3:16, Jer. 25:30–33, Rev. 16:17, we learn that it is the voice of God as he speaks in terrible majesty from his throne in Heaven, that causes this fearful commotion in earth and sky. Once the Lord spoke, when, with an audible voice, he declared to his creatures the precepts of his eternal law; and the earth shook. He is to speak again, and not only the earth will shake, but the heavens also. Then will the earth "reel to and fro like a drunkard;" it will be "disolved," and "clean broken down;" Isa. 24; mountains will move from their firm bases; islands will suddenly change their location in the midst of the sea; from the level plain will arise the precipitous mountain; and rocks will thrust up their ragged forms from earth's broken surface; and while the voice of God is reverberating through the earth, the direst confusion will reign over the face of nature.

Then will the world's dream of carnal security be effectually broken. Kings who, intoxicated with their own earthly authority, have never dreamed of a higher power than themselves, now

realize that there is One who reigns King of kings; and the great men behold the vanity of all earthly pomp, for there is a greatness above that of earth; and the rich men throw their silver and gold to the moles and bats, for it cannot save them in that day; and the chief captains forget their little brief authority and the mighty men their might; and every bondman, who is in the still worse bondage of sin, and every freeman, all classes of the wicked, from the highest to the lowest, join in the general wail of consternation and despair. They who never prayed to Him whose arm could bring salvation, now raise an agonizing prayer to rocks and mountains to bury them forever from his presence. Fain would they now avoid reaping what they by a life of lust and sin had sown. Fain would they now shun the fearful treasure of wrath which they have been heaping up for themselves against this day. Fain would they bury themselves and their catalogue of crimes in everlasting darkness. And so they fly to the rocks, caves, caverns, and fissures which the broken surface of the earth now presents before them. But it is too late. They cannot conceal their guilt nor escape the long-delayed vengeance.

> "It will be in vain to call,
> Rocks and mountains on us fall,
> For His hand will find out all,
> In that day."

The day which they thought never would come, has at last taken them as in a snare; and the in-

voluntary language of their anguished hearts, is, "The great day of his wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?" Before it is called out by the fearful scenes of this time, we pray you, reader, give your most serious and candid attention to this subject.

Many now affect to despise the institution of prayer. But at one time or another all men will pray. Those who will not now pray to God in penitence, will then pray to the rocks and mountains in despair. And this will be the largest prayer-meeting ever held. As you read these lines think whether you would like to have a part therein.

Adventists are now in the minority; but they will then be in the majority; for all the world will be Adventists. But alas! with the great mass their belief will come too late to do them any good.

Ah! better far
To cease the unequal war,
While pardon, hope, and peace may yet be found;
Nor longer rush upon the embossed shield
Of the Almighty; but repentant yield,
And all your weapons of rebellion ground.
Better pray now in love, than pray ere long in fear.
Call ye upon Him, while He waits to hear;
So in the coming end
When down the parted sky
The angelic hosts attend
The Lord of Heaven, most high,
Before whose face the solid earth is rent,
You may behold in him a friend omnipotent,
And safely rest beneath his sheltering wings,
Amid the ruin of all earthly things.

Chapter VII.

THE SEALING OF THE 144,000.

Verse 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The chronology of the work here introduced, is established beyond mistake. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal; and the seventh seal is not mentioned until we reach the opening of chapter 8. The whole of chapter 7 is therefore thrown in here parenthetically. Why is it thus thrown in at this point? Evidently for the purpose of stating additional particulars concerning the sixth seal. The expression, "after these things," does not mean after the fulfillment of all the events previously described; but after the prophet had been carried down in vision to the close of the sixth seal, in order not to break the consecutive order of events, as given in chapter 6,

then his mind is called to what is mentioned in chapter 7, as further particulars to transpire in connection with that seal. Then we inquire, Between what events in that seal does this work come in? It must transpire before the departing of the heavens as a scroll; for after that event there is no place for such a work as this. And it must take place subsequently to the signs in the sun, moon, and stars; for these signs have been fulfilled, and such a work has not yet been accomplished. It comes in, therefore, between the 13th and 14th verses of Rev. 6. But there, as already shown, is just where we now stand. Hence the first part of Rev. 7 relates to a work, the accomplishment of which may be looked for at the present time.

Four Angels. Angels are ever-present agents in the affairs of earth; and why may not these be four of those heavenly beings into whose hands God has committed the work here described: to hold the winds while it is God's purpose that they should not blow, and to hurt the earth with them when the time comes that they should be loosed; for it will be noticed, verse 3, that the "hurting" is a work committed to their hands equally with the "holding," so that they do not merely let the winds go, when they are to blow; but they *cause* them to blow; they *impel* forward the work of destruction with their own supernatural energy. But the hurting process here brought to view does not include the seven last plagues. That work is given into the hands of seven special angels; this, into the hands of four.

Four Corners of the Earth. An expression denoting the four quarters, or the four points of the compass, and signifying that these angels, in their particular sphere had charge of the whole earth.

The Four Winds. Winds, in the Bible, symbolize political commotion, strife, and war. Dan. 7:2; Jer. 25:32. The *four* winds, held by four angels standing in the four quarters of the earth, must denote all the elements of strife and commotion that exist in the world; and when they are all loosed, and all blow together, it will constitute the great whirlwind just referred to in Jeremiah.

The Angel Ascending from the East. Another literal angel, having charge of another specific work. Instead of the words "ascending from the east," some translations read, "ascending from the sun rising," which is a more literal translation. We understand the expression to signify manner rather than locality; that as the sun arises with rays at first oblique, and comparatively powerless, but increases in strength until it shines in all its meridian power and splendor, so the work of this angel would commence in weakness, move onward with ever-accumulating influence, and close in strength and power.

The Seal of the Living God. This is the distinguishing characteristic of the ascending angel. He bears with him the seal of the living God. From this fact and the chronology of his work, we are to determine, if possible, what movement is symbolized by his mission.

The nature of his work is evidently embraced in his having the seal of the living God ; and to ascertain what this work is, we therefore inquire what this seal of the living God is, which he bears with him.

1. Definition of the term. A seal is defined to be an instrument of sealing, that which "is used by individuals, corporate bodies, and States, for making impressions on wax, upon instruments of writing, as an *evidence* of their *authenticity*." The original word in this passage is defined, "A seal, *i. e.*, a signet ring; a mark, stamp, badge; a token, a pledge." Among the significations of the verb are the following: "To secure to any one, to make sure; to set a seal or mark upon anything in token of its being genuine or approved; to attest, to confirm, to establish, to distinguish by a mark." By a comparison of Gen. 17:11, with Rom. 4:11, and Rev. 7:3, with Eze. 9:4, in connection with the above definition, the reader will see that the words token, sign, seal, and mark, are used in the Bible as synonymous terms. The seal of God as brought to view in our text is to be applied to the servants of God. We are not, of course, to suppose that in this case it is some literal mark to be made in the flesh, but that it is some institution or observance having special reference to God, which will serve as a "mark of distinction" between the worshipers of God, and the wicked around them.

2. The use of a seal. A seal is used to render valid or authentic any enactments or laws which a

person or power may promulgate. Frequent instances of its use occur in the Scriptures: In 1 Kings 21:8, we read that Jezebel "wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal." These letters then had all the authority of king Ahab. Again, in Esth. 3:12, "In the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring." So also in chap. 8:8, "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

3. Where a seal is used. Always in connection with some law or enactment that demands obedience, or upon documents that are to be made legal or subject to the provisions of law. The idea of law is inseparable from a seal.

4. As applied to God. We are not to suppose that to the enactments and laws of God binding upon men, there must be attached a literal seal, made with literal instruments. But from the definition of the term, and the purpose for which a seal is used, as shown above, we must understand a seal to be strictly that which gives validity and authenticity to enactments and laws. This is found, though a literal seal may not be used, in the name or signature of the law-making power, expressed in such terms as to show what the power is, and its right to make laws and demand obedience. Even with a literal seal, the name must always be used. See the references above given. An instance of the use of the name alone seems to occur in Dan. 6:8: "Now, O king, establish the

decree, and *sign* the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not;" that is, affix the signature of royalty, showing who it is that demands obedience, and his right to demand it.

In a gospel prophecy found in Isa. 8, we read: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Verse 16. This must refer to a work of reviving some of the claims of the law in the minds of the disciples, which had been overlooked, or perverted from their true meaning. And this, in the prophecy, is called sealing the law, or restoring to it its seal, which had been taken from it.

Again, the 144,000, who, in the chapter before us, are said to be sealed with the *seal* of God in their foreheads, are again brought to view in Rev. 14:1, where they are said to have the Father's *name* written in their foreheads.

From the foregoing reasoning, facts, and declarations of Scriptures two conclusions inevitably follow:—

1. The seal of God is found in connection with the law of God.

2. The seal of God is that part of his law which contains his name or descriptive title, showing who he is, the extent of his dominion, and his right to rule.

The law of God is admitted by all disinterested evangelical denominations to be summarily contained in the decalogue, or ten commandments. We have, then, but to examine these commandments, to

see which one it is that constitutes the seal of the law, or, in other words, makes known the true God, the law-making power. The first three commandments mention the word God; but we cannot tell from these, who is meant; for there are multitudes of objects to which this term is applied. There are "gods many and lords many," as the apostle says. 1 Cor. 8:5. Passing over the fourth commandment for the time being, the fifth contains the words Lord and God, but does not define them; and the remaining five precepts do not contain the name of God at all. Now what shall be done? With that portion of the law which we have examined, it would be impossible to convict the grossest idolater of sin. The worshiper of images could say, This idol before me is my god, his name is god, and these are his precepts. The worshiper of the heavenly bodies could also say, The sun is my god, and I worship him according to this law. Thus, without the fourth commandment, the decalogue is null and void so far as it pertains to enforcing the worship of the true God. But let us now add the fourth commandment, restore to the law this precept, which many are ready to contend has been expunged, and see how the case will then stand. As we examine this commandment which contains the declaration, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is," etc., we see at once that we are reading the requirements of Him who created all things. The sun, then, is not the God of the decalogue, but He who made the sun. No object in Heaven or earth

is the being who here demands obedience; for the God of this law is the one who made all created things. Now we have a weapon against idolatry. Now this law can no longer be applied to false gods, who "have not made the heavens and the earth." Jer. 10:11. Now the author of this law has declared who he is, the extent of his dominion, and his right to rule; for every created intelligence must at once assent that He who is the Creator of all, has a right to demand obedience from all his creatures. Thus, with the fourth commandment in its place, this wonderful document, the decalogue, the only document among men which God ever wrote with his own finger, has a signature; it has that which renders it intelligible and authentic; it has a seal. But without the fourth commandment, it lacks all these things.

From the foregoing reasoning it is evident that the fourth commandment constitutes the seal of the law of God, or the seal of God. But the Scriptures do not leave us without direct testimony on this point.

We have seen above that in Scripture usage, sign, seal, token, and mark, are synonymous terms. Now the Lord expressly says that the Sabbath is a *sign* between him and his people. "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a *sign* between me and you throughout your generations; *that ye may know that I am the Lord* that doth sanctify you." Ex. 31:13. The same fact is again stated by the prophet Ezekiel, 20:12, 20. Here the Lord

told his people that the very object of their keeping the Sabbath, that is, observing the fourth commandment, was that they might *know* that he was the true God. It may be said that the Sabbath was only a sign between God and the Jews. True, when this was spoken, the Jews had been separated from all other nations, to be God's people and the depositaries of all divine truth in the earth. But when they through disobedience were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in through Christ, becoming "Israelites indeed" and "Jews inwardly," would not the declaration apply equally to them?

Thus the fourth commandment, or the Sabbath, is taken by the Lord as a *sign* between him and his people, or the *seal* of his law in both dispensations; the people by that commandment signifying that they are the worshipers of the true God, and God by the same commandment making himself known as the great Creator of all things.

In harmony with this we notice the significant fact that whenever the sacred writer wishes to point out the true God in distinction from false gods of every description, an appeal is made to the great facts of creation upon which the fourth commandment is based. See 2 Kings 19:15; 2 Chron. 2:12; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6; Isa. 37:16; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; Job. 9:8; Isa. 51:13; Jer. 10:10–12; Ps. 96:5; Jer. 32:17; 51:15; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:23, etc.

We refer again to the fact that the same com-

pany, who in Rev. 7 have the seal of the living God in their foreheads, are brought to view again in Rev. 14:1, having the Father's *name* in their foreheads. This is good proof that the "seal of the living God" and the "Father's name" are used synonymously. The chain of evidence on this point is rendered complete, when it is ascertained that the fourth commandment, which has been shown to be the seal of the law, is spoken of by the Lord as that which contains his name. The proof of this will be seen by referring to Deut. 16:6: "But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his *name* in, there shalt thou sacrifice the passover," etc. What was there where they sacrificed the passover? There was the sanctuary, having in its holiest apartment the ark with the ten commandments, the fourth of which declared the true God, and contained his name. Wherever this was, there God's name was placed; and this was the only object to which the language could be applied.

Having ascertained what the seal of God is, we are prepared to proceed with the application of the prophecy. By the scenes introduced in the verses before us, namely, the four winds apparently about to blow, bringing war and trouble upon the land, and this work restrained till the servants of God should be sealed, as though a preparatory work must be done for them to save them from this trouble, we are reminded of the houses of the Israelites marked with the blood of the paschal lamb,

and spared as the destroying angel passed over to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, Ex. 12, also of the mark made by the man with a writer's ink-horn, Eze. 9, upon all those who were to be spared by the men with the slaughtering weapons who followed after; and we conclude that the seal of God, here placed upon his servants, is some distinguishing mark or religious characteristic, through which they will be exempted from the judgments of God that fall on the wicked around them.

As we have found the seal of God in the fourth commandment, the inquiry follows, Does the observance of that commandment involve any peculiarity in religious practice? Yes, a very marked and striking one. It is one of the most singular facts to be met with in religious history that, in an age of such boasted gospel light as the present, when the influence of Christianity is so powerful and wide-spread, one of the most striking peculiarities in practice which a person can adopt, and one of the greatest crosses he can take up, even in the most enlightened and Christian lands, is the simple observance of the law of God. For the fourth commandment requires the observance of the seventh day of each week as the Sabbath of the Lord; but almost all Christendom, through the combined influence of paganism and the papacy, have been beguiled into the keeping of the first day. A person has but to commence the observance of the day enjoined in the commandment, and a mark of peculiarity is upon him at once. He is

distinct alike from the professedly religious and the unconverted world.

We conclude, then, that the angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, is a divine messenger in charge of a work of reform to be carried on among men in reference to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The agents of this work on the earth are of course ministers of Christ; for to men is given the commission of instructing their fellow-men in Bible truth; but, as there is order in the execution of all the divine counsels, why may not a literal angel have the charge and oversight of this work?

We have already noticed the chronology of this work as locating it in our own time. This is further evident from the fact that, as the next event after the sealing of these servants of God, we behold them before the throne, with palms of victory in their hands. The sealing is, therefore, the last work to be accomplished for them prior to their redemption.

In Rev. 14, we find the same work again brought to view under the symbol of an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the most terrific warning that ever fell upon the ears of men. We shall speak of this more fully when we reach that chapter. We refer to it now, as it is the last work to be accomplished for the world before the coming of Christ, which is the next event in the order of that prophecy, and hence must synchronize with the work here brought to view in Rev. 7:1–3. The

angel with the seal of the living God, in chapter 7, is therefore the same as the third angel of chapter 14. And this view gives additional strength to our view of the seal. For while as the result of the work in chapter 7, a certain company are sealed with the seal of the living God, as the result of the third message of chapter 14, a company are brought out rendering scriptural obedience to all the "*commandments of God.*" Verse 12. But there is no commandment of the decalogue except the fourth, upon which the Christian world theoretically needs reforming; and that this is the representative question in this message is evident from the fact that the keeping of the commandments, observing, with all the other moral precepts, the Lord's Sabbath, is what distinguishes the servants of God from those who worship the beast and receive his mark, which is, as will be hereafter shown, the observance of a counterfeit Sabbath.

Having thus briefly noticed the main points of the subject, we now come to the most striking feature of all. In exact accordance with the foregoing chronological argument, we find this work already being fulfilled before our eyes. The third angel's message is being proclaimed; the angel ascending from the east is on his mission; the reform on the Sabbath question has commenced; it is surely, though yet in comparative silence, working its way through the land; it is destined to agitate every country entitled to the light of the gospel; and it will result in bringing out a people prepared for

the soon coming of the Saviour, and sealed for his everlasting kingdom.

With one more question, we leave these verses upon which we have so lengthily dwelt. Have we seen among the nations any movements which would indicate that the cry of the ascending angel, "Hurt not," etc., by the blowing of the winds, "till we have sealed the servants of God," has in any manner been answered? The time during which the winds are held could not, from the nature of the case, be a time of profound peace. This would not answer to the prophecy. For, in order for it to be manifest that the winds were being held, there must be disturbance, agitation, anger, and jealousy among the nations, with an occasional outburst of strife, like a fitful gust breaking away from the imprisoned and struggling tempest. And these outbursts must be suddenly and unexpectedly checked. Then, but not otherwise, would it be evident to him who looked at events in the light of prophecy, that the restraining hand of Omnipotence was laid, for some good purpose, upon the surging elements of strife and war. And such has been the aspect of our times for more than thirty years. Commencing with the great revolution of 1848, when so many European thrones toppled into the dust, what a state of anger and political unrest has existed among all the nations of the earth! New and unlooked-for complications have suddenly sprung up, throwing matters into apparently inextricable confusion, and threatening immediate

and direful war. And now and then the conflict has burst forth in fury, and a thousand voices have been raised to predict that the great crisis had come, that universal war must result, and the termination no man could foretell; when suddenly and unaccountably it has been extinguished, and all subsided into quiet again. The terrible rebellion in our own land of 1861 to 1865 is a notable instance. By the spring of the latter year, so great had become the pressure upon the nation for men and means to continue the war that it began seriously to impede the progress of the work symbolized by the ascending angel, even threatening to arrest it entirely. Those interested in these truths, believing that the time had come for the application of the prophecy, and that the words of the angel, "Hurt not," etc., indicated a movement on the part of the church, accordingly raised their petitions to the Ruler of nations to restrain the cruel work of tumult and war. Days of fasting and prayer were set apart for this purpose. The time at which this occurred was a dark and gloomy period of the war; and not a few high in political life predicted its indefinite continuance, and an appalling intensity of all its evils. But suddenly a change came; and not three months had elapsed from the time of which we speak, ere the last rebel army had surrendered, and the last organized rebel had laid down his arms. So sudden and entire was the collapse, and so grateful were all hearts at relief from the pressure of the

terrible strife, that the nation broke forth into a song of Jubilee, and these words were conspicuously displayed at the national capitol: "*This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.*" There are those who believe there was a definite cause for this sudden cessation of the strife, of which, of course, the world is but little aware. The sudden conclusion of the German-French war of 1870 and the recent war between Turkey and Russia may be cited as still later examples. Perhaps further events of this kind are yet to be witnessed to fulfil more completely this feature of the prophecy.

VERSE 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand. 7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8. Of the tribe of Zebulun were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The number sealed is here stated to be one hundred and forty-four thousand; and from the fact that twelve thousand are sealed from each of the twelve tribes, many suppose that this work must have been accomplished as far back at least as about the beginning of the Christian era, when these tribes

were literally in existence. They do not see how it can apply to our own time when every trace of distinction between these tribes has been so long and so completely obliterated. We refer such to the opening language of the epistle of James: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the *twelve tribes* which are scattered abroad, greeting: My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," etc. Those whom James here addresses, are, 1. Christians; for they are his brethren. 2. They are not the converts to Christianity from the Jews, the twelve tribes of his own day; for he addresses them in view of the coming of the Lord. See chapter 5. He is thus addressing the last generation of Christians, the Christians of our own day; and he calls them the twelve tribes scattered abroad. How can this be? Paul explains in Rom. 11: 17–24. In the striking figure of grafting which he there introduces, the tame olive tree represents Israel. Some of the branches, the natural descendants of Abraham, were broken off because of unbelief (in Christ). Through faith in Christ the wild olive scions, the Gentiles, are grafted into the tame olive stock, and thus the twelve tribes are perpetuated. And here we find an explanation of the language of the same apostle: "They are not all Israel which are of Israel," and "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." Rom. 9: 6–8; 2: 28, 29. So we find on the gates of the New Jerusalem, which is a New-Testament or Christian,

not a Jewish, city, the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the foundations of this city are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Rev. 21:12–14. If the twelve tribes belong exclusively to the former dispensation, the more natural order would have been to have their names on the foundations, and those of the twelve apostles on the gates; but no, the names of the twelve tribes are on the gates. And as through these gates, so inscribed, all the redeemed hosts will go in and out, so, as belonging to these twelve tribes will all the redeemed be reckoned, whether on earth they were Jews or Gentiles. Of course we look in vain for any marks of distinction between the tribes here on earth; for since Christ has appeared in the flesh, the preservation of the genealogy of the tribes is not necessary. But in Heaven, where the names of the church of the first-born are being enrolled, we may be sure there is order, and that each name is enrolled in its proper tribe.

It will be observed that the enumeration of the tribes here differs from that given in other places. The twelve sons of Jacob who became the heads of great families, called tribes, were, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Aser, and Joseph. But Jacob, on his dying bed, adopted the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, to constitute two of the tribes of Israel. Gen. 48:45. This divided the tribe of

Joseph, making thirteen tribes in all. But in the distribution of the land of Canaan by lot, they numbered but twelve tribes, and made but twelve lots; for the tribe of Levi was left out, being appointed to the service of the tabernacle, and having no inheritance. But in the passage before us, Ephraim and Dan are omitted, and Levi and Joseph put in their places. The omission of Dan is accounted for by commentators on the ground that that tribe was the one chiefly addicted to idolatry. See Judges 18, etc. The tribe of Levi here takes its place with the rest, as in the heavenly Canaan the reasons for their not having an inheritance, as in the earthly, will not exist; and Joseph is probably put for Ephraim, it being a name which appears to have been applied to either of the tribes of Ephraim or Manasseh. Num. 13:11.

Twelve thousand were sealed "out of" each of the twelve tribes, showing that not all who in the records of Heaven had a place among these tribes when this sealing work commenced, stood the test, and were overcomers at last. For the names of those already in the book of life will be blotted out, unless they overcome. Rev. 3: 5.

VERSE 9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, 10, And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the

throne on their faces, and worshiped God, 12, Saying, Amen; Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

The sealing having been accomplished, John beholds a countless multitude worshiping God in rapture before his throne. This vast throng are undoubtedly the saved out of every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue, raised from the dead at the second coming of Christ, showing that the sealing is the last work accomplished for the people of God, prior to translation.

VERSE 13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The questions proposed by one of the elders to John, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? taken in connection with John's answer, Sir, thou knowest, implying that he did not know, would seem to be devoid of all point, if they had reference to the whole of the

great multitude now before him. For John did know who they were, and from whence they came; inasmuch as he had just said that they were people, redeemed of course, out of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues; and John could have answered, These are the redeemed ones from all the nations of the earth. But if a special company in this vast throng were referred to, distinguished by some special mark or position, then it might not be so evident who they were, and what had given them their peculiarity; and the questions as applied to them would be appropriate and pertinent. We therefore incline to the view that attention is called to a special company by the questions which were proposed by one of the elders; and no company is brought to view to which special allusion would more naturally be made, than to the company spoken of in the first part of the chapter, namely, the 144,000. John had indeed seen this company in their mortal state as they were receiving the seal of the living God amid the troublous scenes of the last days; but as they here stand among the redeemed throng, the transition is so great, and the condition in which they now appear so different, that he does not recognize them as the special company which he saw sealed upon the earth. And to this company, the language that follows seems to be specially applicable:—

1. They came out of great tribulation. While it is true in some degree of all Christians that they must "through much tribulation enter into the

kingdom of God," it is true in a very emphatic sense of the 144,000. They pass through the great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Dan. 12: 1. They experienced the mental anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble. Jer. 30: 4–7. They stand without a mediator through the terrific scenes of the seven last plagues, those exhibitions of God's unmingled wrath in the earth. Rev. 15: 16. They pass through the severest time of trouble the world has ever known, although they are delivered out of it.

2. They wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. To the last generation the testimony is very emphatic on the subject of obtaining the white raiment. Rev. 3: 5, 18. And though the 144,000 are accused of rejecting Christ and trusting to their own works for salvation, because they refuse to violate the commandments of God, Rev. 14: 1, 12, in the great day that calumny will be wiped off. It will be seen that they have rested their hope of life on the merits of the shed blood of their divine Redeemer, making him their source of righteousness. There is peculiar force in saying of these that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

3. Verse 15 describes the post of honor they occupy in the kingdom, and their nearness to God. In another place they are called "the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." Rev. 14: 4.

4. In verse 16, it is said, "They shall hunger no

more, neither thirst any more." This shows that they have once suffered hunger and thirst. To what can this refer? As it doubtless has reference to some special experience, may it not refer to their experience in the time of trouble, more especially during the plagues? In this time the righteous will be reduced to bread and water; and though that "will be sure," Isa. 33: 16, enough for sustenance, yet may it not be that, when the pastures, with all fruits and vegetation, are dried up, Joel 1: 18–20, and the rivers and fountains are turned to blood, Rev. 16: 4–9, to reduce their connection with earth and earthly things to the lowest limit, the saints who pass through that time will be brought occasionally to the extreme degrees of hunger and thirst? But the kingdom, once gained, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." And the prophet continues in reference to this company, "Neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat." We remember that the 144,000 live through the time when power is given unto the sun "to scorch men with fire." Rev. 16: 8, 9. And though they are shielded from the deadly effect which it has upon the wicked around them, we cannot suppose that their sensibilities will be so blunted that they will feel no unpleasant sensations from the terrific heat. No, as they enter the fields of the heavenly Canaan, they will be prepared to appreciate the divine assurance, that the sun shall not light upon, or injure them, nor any heat.

5. And the Lamb shall lead them. Another tes-

timony concerning the same company, and applying at the same time, says, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Rev. 14: 4. Both expressions denote the state of intimate and divine companionship to which the blessed Redeemer admits them in reference to himself.

The psalmist in the following beautiful passage seems to allude to the same promise: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Ps. 36: 8. The phraseology of this promise to the one hundred and forty-four thousand is also partially found in the following glowing prophecy from the pen of Isaiah: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it." Isa. 25: 8.

Chapter VIII.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

We name as the subject of this chapter the seven trumpets, as these constitute the main theme of the chapter, although there are other matters introduced before the opening of that series of events. The first verse of this chapter relates to the events of the preceding chapters, and should not, we think, have been separated from them by the division of the chapter.

Verse 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour.

The series of the seven seals is here resumed and concluded. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal, the eighth commences with the opening of the seventh seal, causing the seventh chapter to stand parenthetically between the sixth and seventh seals, thereby showing that the sealing work of that chapter belongs to the sixth seal.

Silence in Heaven. Concerning the cause of this silence only conjecture can be offered—a conjecture, however, which is supported by the events of the sixth seal. That seal does not bring us to the

second advent, although it embraces events that transpire in close connection therewith. It introduces the fearful commotions of the elements described as the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll, caused by the voice of God, the breaking up of the surface of the earth, and the confession at last on the part of the wicked that the great day of God's wrath is come. They are doubtless in momentary expectation of seeing the King appear, in, to them, unendurable glory. But the seal stops just short of that event. The personal appearing of Christ must therefore be allotted to the next seal. But when the Lord appears, he comes with all the holy angels with him. Matt. 25: 31. And when *all* the heavenly harpers leave the courts above to come down with their divine Lord as he descends to gather the fruit of his redeeming work, will there not be silence in Heaven?

The length of this period of silence, if we consider it prophetic time, would be about seven days.

VERSE 2. **And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**

This verse introduces a new and distinct series of events. In the seals, we have had the history of the church during what is called the gospel dispensation. In the seven trumpets, now introduced, we have the principal political and warlike events which were to transpire during the same time.

VERSE 3. **And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much**

incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Having, as it were, in verse 2, brought out the seven angels, and introduced them before us upon the stage of action, John for a moment, in the three verses last quoted, directs attention to an entirely different scene. The angel which approaches the altar is not one of the seven trumpet angels. The altar is the altar of incense, which in the earthly sanctuary was placed in the first apartment. Here, then, is another proof that there exists in Heaven a sanctuary with its corresponding vessels of service, of which the earthly was the figure, and that we are taken into that sanctuary by the visions of John. A work of ministration in the sanctuary above, for all the saints, is thus brought to view. Doubtless the entire work of mediation for the people of God during the gospel dispensation, is here presented. This is apparent from the fact that the angel offers his incense with the prayers of *all* saints; and that we are here carried forward to the end, is evident from the act of the angel in filling the censer with fire and casting it unto the earth; for his work is then done; no more prayers are to be offered up mingled with incense; and this can have its application only at the time when the ministration of Christ in the sanctuary in behalf of mankind has

forever ceased. And the events that follow this act of the angel, namely, voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake, are exactly such as we are elsewhere informed transpire at the close of human probation. See Rev. 11: 19; 16: 17, 18.

But why are these verses thus thrown in here? Answer. As a message of hope and comfort for the church. The seven angels with their warlike trumpets had been introduced; terrible scenes were to transpire under their sounding; but, before they commence, the church is pointed to the work of mediation in their behalf above, and their source of help and strength during this time. Though they should be tossed like feathers upon the tumultuous waves of strife and war, they were to know that their great High Priest still ministered for them in the sanctuary in Heaven, and that thither they could direct their prayers, and have them offered with incense to their Father in Heaven. Thus could they gain strength and support in all their calamities.

VERSE 6. **And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.**

The subject of the seven trumpets is here resumed and occupies the remainder of this chapter and all of chapter 9. The seven angels prepare themselves to sound. Their sounding comes in as a complement to the prophecy of Dan. 2 and 7, commencing with the breaking up of the old Roman empire into its ten divisions, of which, in the first four trumpets, we have a description.

VERSE 7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

A full exposition of the seven trumpets is given in a work entitled "An Exposition of the Seven Trumpets of Rev. 8 and 9," published at the REVIEW AND HERALD Office, Battle Creek, Mich., to which the reader is referred for a more extended examination of the subject. To that work we are chiefly indebted for the extracts given below.

Mr. Keith has very justly remarked on the subject of this prophecy:—

"None could elucidate the texts more clearly, or expound them more fully, than the task has been performed by Gibbon. The chapters of the skeptical philosopher, that treat directly of the matter, need but a text to be prefixed, and a few unholy words to be blotted out, to form a series of expository lectures on the eighth and ninth chapters of Revelation." "Little or nothing is left for the professed interpreter to do but to point to the pages of Gibbon."

The first sore and heavy judgment which fell on Western Rome in its downward course, was the war with the Goths under Alaric, who opened the way for later inroads. After the death of Theodosius, the Roman emperor, in January 395, before the end of the winter, the Goths, under Alaric, were in arms against the empire.

"Hail and fire, mingled with blood, were cast upon the earth." The terrible effects of this Gothic

invasion, are represented as "hail," from the fact of the northern origin of the invaders; "fire," from the destruction by flame of both city and country; and "blood," from the terrible slaughter of the citizens of the empire by the bold and intrepid warriors.

The blast of the first trumpet has its location at the close of the fourth century, and onward, and refers to these desolating invasions of the Roman empire by the Goths.

I know not how the history of the sounding of the first trumpet can be more impressively set forth than by presenting the graphic rehearsal of the facts stated in Gibbon's history, by Mr. Keith, in his Signs of the Times, Vol. I, pp. 221–233.

"Large extracts show how amply and well Gibbon has expounded his text, in the history of the first trumpet, the first storm that pervaded the Roman earth, and the first fall of Rome. To use his words in more direct comment, we read thus the sum of the matter: The Gothic nation was in arms at the first sound of the trumpet, and in the uncommon severity of the winter, they rolled their ponderous wagons over the broad and icy back of the river. The fertile fields of Phocis and Bœotia were crowded with a deluge of barbarians; the males were massacred; the females and cattle of the flaming villages were driven away. The deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths could easily be discovered after several years. The whole territory of Attica was blasted by the baneful presence

of Alaric. The most fortunate of the inhabitants of Corinth, Argos, Sparta, were saved by death from beholding the conflagration of their cities. In a season of such extreme heat that the beds of the rivers were dry, Alaric invaded the dominion of the West. A secluded 'old man of Verona,' the poet Claudian, pathetically lamented the fate of his contemporary *trees*, which must *blaze* in the *conflagration* of the *whole country:* [note the words of the prophecy,—'the third part of the *trees* was *burnt up*] and the emperor of the Romans fled before the king of the Goths.

"A furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany; from the northern extremity of which the barbarians marched almost to the gates of Rome. They achieved the destruction of the West. The dark cloud which was collected along the coasts of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube. The pastures of Gaul, in which flocks and herds grazed, and the banks of the Rhine, which were covered with elegant houses and well-cultivated farms, formed a scene of peace and plenty, which was suddenly changed into a desert, distinguished from the solitude of nature only by smoking ruins. Many cities were cruelly oppressed or destroyed. Many thousands were inhumanly massacred. And the consuming flames of war spread over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul.

"Alaric again stretched his ravages over Italy. During four years, the Goths ravaged and reigned

over it without control. And, in the pillage and fire of Rome, the streets of the city were filled with dead bodies; the flames consumed many public and private buildings; and the ruins of a palace remained (after a century and a half), a stately monument of the Gothic conflagration.

"The concluding sentence of the thirty-third chapter of Gibbon's History, is, of itself, a clear and comprehensive commentary; for, in winding up his own description of the brief, but most eventful period, he concentrates, as in a parallel reading, the sum of the history, and the substance of the prediction. But the words which precede it are not without their meaning: 'The public devotion of the age was impatient to exalt the saints and martyrs of the Catholic church on the altars of Diana and Hercules. The *union* of the Roman empire was *dissolved;* its genius was humbled in the dust; and armies of unknown barbarians, issuing from the frozen regions of the North, had established their victorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa.'

"The last word,—Africa,—is the signal for the sounding of the second trumpet. The scene changes from the shores of the Baltic to the southern coast of the Mediterranean, or from the frozen regions of the North to the borders of burning Africa. And instead of a storm of hail being cast upon the earth, a burning mountain was cast into the sea."

VERSE 8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea;

and the third part of the sea became blood; 9; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The Roman empire, after Constantine, was divided into three parts; and hence the frequent remark, "a third part of men," etc., in allusion to the third part of the empire which was under the scourge. This division of the Roman kingdom was made at the death of Constantine, between his three sons, *Constantius, Constantine II,* and *Constans.* Constantius possessed the East, and fixed his residence at Constantinople, the new metropolis of the empire. Constantine the Second held Britain, Gaul, and Spain. Constans held Illyrica, Africa, and Italy. (See *Sabine's Eccl. Hist., p.* 155.) Of this well-known historical fact, Albert Barnes, in his notes on Rev. 12: 4, says: "Twice, at least, before the Roman empire became divided permanently into the two parts, the Eastern and the Western, there was a *tripartite* division of the empire. The first occurred A. D. 311, when it was divided between Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin; the other A. D. 337, on the death of Constantine, when it was divided between his three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius."

The history illustrative of the sounding of the second trumpet evidently relates to the invasion and conquest of Africa, and afterward of Italy, by the terrible Genseric. His conquests were, for the most part, NAVAL; and his triumphs were "as it were a great mountain burning with fire, cast into

the sea." What figure would better, or so well, illustrate the collision of navies, and the general havoc of war on the maritime coasts? In explaining this trumpet, we are to look for some events which will have a particular bearing on the commercial world. The symbol used, naturally leads us to look for agitation and commotion. Nothing but a fierce maritime warfare would fulfill the prediction. If the sounding of the first four trumpets relates to four remarkable events which contributed to the downfall of the Roman empire, and the first trumpet refers to the ravages of the Goths under Alaric, in this we naturally look for the *next* succeeding act of invasion which shook the Roman power and conduced to its fall. The next great invasion *was* that of "the terrible Genseric," at the head of the Vandals. His career was marked by the years A. D. 428–468. This great Vandal chief had his headquarters in Africa. But, as Gibbon states, "The discovery and conquest of the Black nations (in Africa), that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes TOWARD THE SEA; he resolved to create a *naval power*, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance." From the port of Carthage he repeatedly made piratical sallies, and preyed on the Roman commerce, and waged war with that empire. To cope with this sea monarch, the Roman emperor, Majorian, made extensive naval preparation. Three hundred long galleys, with an adequate proportion

of transports and smaller vessels, were collected in the secure and capacious harbor of Carthagena, in Spain. But Genseric was saved from impending and inevitable ruin by the treachery of some powerful subjects, envious or apprehensive of their master's success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Carthagena; many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt, and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day.

Italy continued to be long afflicted by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself, though at a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions.

The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Leucania, Brutium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily.

The celerity of their motion enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and to attack the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry.

A last and desperate attempt to dispossess Genseric of the sovereignty of the seas, was made in the year 468, by LEO, the emperor of the East. Gibbon bears witness to this as follows:—

"The whole expense of the African campaign amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold,—about five million two hundred thousand pounds sterling. The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage, consisted of eleven hundred and thirteen ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded one hundred thousand men. The army of Heraclius, and the fleet of Marcellinus, either joined or seconded the Imperial Lieutenant. The wind became favorable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals, and they towed after them many large barks filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by a sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence, and the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and mariners, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. Whilst they labored to extricate themselves from the fire-ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valor; and many of the Romans who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals. After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the tyrant of the

sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia, were again exposed to his revenge and avarice. Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and before he died, in the fullness of years and of glory, he beheld the FINAL EXTINCTION of the empire of the West."—*Gibbon*, Vol. III, pp. 495–498.

Concerning the important part which this bold corsair acted in the downfall of Rome, Mr. Gibbon uses this significant language: "Genseric, a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila."

VERSE 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11; And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

In the interpretation and application of this passage, we are brought to the third important event which resulted in the subversion of the Roman empire. And in finding a historical fulfillment of this third trumpet, we shall be indebted to the Notes of Mr. Albert Barnes for a few extracts. In explaining this scripture, it is necessary, as this commentator says,—

"That there should be some chieftain, or warrior, who might be compared to a blazing meteor; whose course would be singularly brilliant; who would appear suddenly LIKE a blazing star, and then dis-

appear like a star whose light was quenched in the waters. That the desolating course of that meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world that abounded with springs of water and running streams. That an effect would be produced *as if* those streams and fountains were made bitter; that is, that many persons would perish, and that wild desolations would be caused in the vicinity of those rivers and streams, *as if* a baleful star should fall into the waters, and death should spread over lands adjacent to them and watered by them."—*Notes on Rev. 8.*

It is here premised that this trumpet has allusion to the desolating wars and furious invasions of Attila against the Roman power, which he carried on at the head of his hordes of Huns. Speaking of this warrior, particularly of his personal appearance, Mr. Barnes, on Rev. 8, says:—

"In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the east, gathering his Huns, and poured them down, as we shall see, with the rapidity of a flashing meteor, suddenly on the empire. He regarded himself also as devoted to MARS, the god of war, and was accustomed to array himself in a peculiarly brilliant manner, so that his appearance, in the language of his flatterers, was such as to dazzle the eyes of the beholders."

In speaking of the *locality* of the events predicted by this trumpet, Mr. Barnes has this note:—

"It is said particularly that the effect would be

on 'the rivers' and on 'the fountains of waters.' If this has a literal application, or if, as was supposed in the case of the second trumpet, the language was such as had reference to the portion of the empire that would be particularly affected by the hostile invasion, then we may suppose that this refers to those portions of the empire that abounded in rivers and streams, and more particularly those in which the rivers and streams had their *origin*,—for the effect was permanently in the '*fountains* of the waters.' As a matter of fact, the principal operations of Attila were on the regions of the Alps, and on the portions of the empire whence the rivers flow down into Italy. The invasion of Attila is described by Mr. Gibbon in this general language: 'The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field.'"

"*And the name of the star is called Wormwood* [denoting the bitter consequences]. These words—which are more intimately connected with the preceding verse, as even the punctuation in our version denotes—recall us for a moment to the character of Attila, to the misery of which he was the author, or the instrument, and to the terror that was inspired by his name.

"'Total extirpation and erasure,' are terms which best denote the calamities he inflicted." He styled himself, "The Scourge of God."

"One of his lieutenants chastised and almost exterminated the Burgundians of the Rhine. They traversed, both in their march and in their return, the territories of the Franks; and they massacred their hostages as well as their captives. Two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage; their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, or were crushed under the weight of rolling wagons; and their unburied limbs were abandoned on public roads, as a prey to dogs and vultures.

"It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod. The Western Emperor, with the senate and people of Rome, humbly and fearfully deprecated the wrath of Attila. And the concluding paragraph of the chapters which recorded his history, is entitled, 'Symptoms of the decay and ruin of the Roman government.' The name of the star is called Wormwood."—*Keith.*

VERSE 12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

We understand that this trumpet symbolizes the career of Odoacer, the barbarian monarch, who was so intimately connected with the downfall of *Western* Rome. The symbols—sun, moon, and stars—evidently denote the great luminaries of the Roman government,—its Emperors, Senators, and Consuls.

Bishop Newton remarks that the last emperor of Western Rome was Momyllus, who in derision was called *Augustulus*, or the "diminutive Augustus." Western Rome fell A. D. 476. Still, however, though the Roman sun was extinguished, its subordinate luminaries shone faintly while the senate and consuls continued. But after many civil reverses, and changes of political fortune, at length, A. D. 566, the whole form of the ancient government was subverted, and Rome itself was reduced from being the empress of the world, to a poor dukedom, tributary to the Exarch of Ravenna.

"EXTINCTION of the Western empire, A. D. 476, or A. D. 479. The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; and he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution. An epistle was addressed, by their unanimous decree, to the Emperor Zeno, the son-in-law and successor of Leo, who had lately been restored, after a short rebellion, to the Byzantine throne. They solemnly disclaim the necessity or even the wish of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy; since in their opinion the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and to protect, at the same time, both the East and the West. In their own name, and in the name of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they basely renounced the right

of choosing their master, the only remaining vestige which yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world.

"The power and glory of Rome, as bearing rule over any nation, became extinct. The name alone remained to the queen of nations. Every token of royalty disappeared from the imperial city. She who had ruled over the nations, sat in the dust, like a second Babylon, and there was no throne where the Cæsars had reigned. The last act of obedience to a Roman prince, which that once august assembly performed, was the acceptance of the resignation of the last emperor of the West, and the abolition of the imperial succession in Italy. The sun of Rome was smitten.

"A new conqueror of Italy, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, speedily arose, who unscrupulously assumed the purple, and reigned by the right of conquest. 'The royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths (March 5, A. D. 493), with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East.' The imperial Roman power, of which either Rome or Constantinople had been jointly or singly the seat, whether in the West or the East, was no longer recognized in Italy, and the third part of the sun was smitten, till it emitted no longer the faintest rays. The power of the Cæsars was unknown in Italy; and a Gothic king reigned over Rome.

"But though the third part of the sun was smitten, and the Roman Imperial power was at an end in the city of the Cæsars, yet the moon and the

stars still shone, or glimmered, for a little longer in the western hemisphere, even in the midst of Gothic darkness. The *consulship* and the *senate* ('the moon and the stars') were not abolished by Theodoric. 'A Gothic historian applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the hight of all temporal power and greatness;'—as the moon reigns by night, after the setting of the sun. And, instead of abolishing that office, Theodoric himself 'congratulates those annual favorites of fortune, who, without the cares, enjoyed the splendor of the throne.'

"But in their prophetic order, the consulship and the senate of Rome met their fate, though they fell not by the hands of Vandals or of Goths. The next revolution in Italy was in subjection to Belisarius, the general of Justinian, emperor of the East. He did not spare what barbarians had allowed. 'The Roman consulship extinguished by Justinian, A. D. 541,' is the title of the last paragraph of the fortieth chapter of Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of Rome. 'The succession of the consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom.' The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars. In the political firmament of the ancient world, while under the reign of imperial Rome, the emperorship, the consulate, and the senate, shone like the sun, the moon, and the stars. The history of their decline and fall is

brought down till the two former were 'extinguished,' in reference to Rome and Italy, which so long had ranked as the first of cities and of countries; and finally, as the fourth trumpet closes, we see the 'extinction of that illustrious assembly,' the Roman senate. The city that had ruled the world, as if in mockery of human greatness, was conquered by the eunuch Narses, the successor of Belisarius. He defeated the Goths (A. D. 552), achieved 'the conquest of Rome,' and the fate of the senate was sealed."

VERSE 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.

This angel is not one of the series of the seven trumpet angels, but simply one who announces that the three remaining trumpets are woe trumpets, on account of the more terrible events to transpire under their sounding. Thus the next, or fifth, trumpet is the first woe, the sixth trumpet, the second woe; and the seventh, the last one in this series of seven trumpets, is the third woe.

Chapter IX.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS CONTINUED.

VERSE 1. **And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.**

For an exposition of this trumpet we shall again draw from the writings of Mr. Keith. This writer truthfully says:—

"There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any part of the apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second woes, to the Saracens and Turks. It is so obvious that it can scarcely be misunderstood. Instead of a verse or two designating each, the whole of the ninth chapter of the Revelation, in equal portions, is occupied with a description of both.

"The Roman empire declined, as it arose, by conquest; but the Saracens and the Turks were the instruments by which a false religion became the scourge of an apostate church; and hence, instead of the fifth and sixth trumpets, like the former, being marked by that name alone, they are called woes.

THE WOE TRUMPET.

SARACENS.

THE TURKS WITH FIREARMS

PLATE I. SYMBOLS OF REVELATION IX.

"Constantinople was besieged for the first time after the extinction of the Western empire, by Chosroes, the king of Persia."

"A star fell from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

"While the Persian monarch contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mohammed as the apostle of God. He rejected the invitation, and tore the epistle. 'It is thus,' exclaimed the Arabian prophet, 'that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplication of Chosroes. Placed on the verge of these two empires of the East, Mohammed observed with secret joy the progress of mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs he ventured to foretell, that before many years should elapse, victory should again return to the banners of the Romans.' 'At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment (!) since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire.'

"It was not, like that designation of Attila, on a *single spot* that the star fell, but UPON THE EARTH.

"Chosroes subjugated the Roman possessions in Asia and Africa. And 'the Roman empire,' at that period, 'was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic coast. The experience of six years at

length persuaded the Persian monarch to renounce the conquest of Constantinople, and to specify the annual tribune of the ransom of the Roman empire: a thousand talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins. Heraclius subscribed to these ignominious terms. But the time and space which he obtained to collect those treasures from the poverty of the East, were industriously employed in the preparation of a bold and desperate attack.'

"The king of Persia despised the obscure Saracen, and derided the message of the pretended prophet of Mecca. Even the overthrow of the Roman empire would not have opened a door for Mohammedanism, or for the progress of the Saracenic armed propagators of an imposture, though the monarch of the Persians and *chagan* of the Avars (the successor of Attila) had divided between them the remains of the kingdom of the Cæsars. Chosroes himself fell. The Persian and Roman monarchies exhausted each other's strength. And before a sword was put into the hands of the false prophet, it was smitten from the hands of those who would have checked his career, and crushed his power.

"Since the days of Scipio and Hannibal, no bolder enterprise has been attempted than that which Heraclius achieved for the deliverance of the empire. He explored his perilous way through the Black Sea and the mountains of Armenia, penetrated into the heart of Persia, and recalled the armies of the great king to the defense of their bleeding country."

"In the battle of Nineveh, which was fiercely fought from daybreak to the eleventh hour, twenty-eight standards, besides those which might be broken or torn, were taken from the Persians; the greatest part of their army was cut in pieces, and the victors, concealing their own loss, passed the night on the field. The cities and palaces of Assyria were opened for the first time to the Romans.

"The Roman emperor was not strengthened by the conquests which he achieved; and a way was prepared at the same time, and by the same means, for the multitude of Saracens from Arabia, like locusts from the same region, who, propagating in their course the dark and delusive Mohammedan creed, speedily overspread both the Persian and Roman empires.

"More complete illustration of this fact could not be desired than is supplied in the concluding words of the chapter from Gibbon, from which the preceding extracts are taken." "Although a victorious army had been formed under the standard of Heraclius, the unnatural effort seems to have exhausted rather than exercised their strength. While the emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief,—an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mohammed; their fanatic valor had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his

reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians."

"'The spirit of fraud and enthusiasm, whose abode is not in the heavens,' was let loose on earth. The bottomless pit needed but a key to open it; *and that key was the fall of Chosroes.* He had contemptuously torn the letter of an obscure citizen of Mecca. But when from his 'blaze of glory,' he sunk into the 'tower of darkness,' which no eye could penetrate, the name of Chosroes was suddenly to pass into oblivion before that of Mohammed; and the crescent seemed but to wait its rising till the falling of the star. Chosroes, after his entire discomfiture and loss of empire, was murdered in the year 628; and the year 629 is marked by 'the conquest of Arabia,' 'and the first war of the Mohammedans against the Roman empire.' And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit. He fell unto the earth. When the strength of the Roman empire was exhausted, and the great king of the East lay dead in his tower of darkness, the pillage of an obscure town on the borders of Syria was 'the prelude of a mighty revolution.' 'The robbers were the apostles of Mohammed, and their fanatic valor emerged from the desert.'"

The Bottomless Pit. The meaning of this term may be learned from the Greek ἄβυσσος, which is defined "deep, bottomless, profound," and may refer to any waste, desolate, and uncultivated place. It

is applied to the earth in its original state of chaos. Gen. 1: 2. In this instance it may appropriately refer to the unknown wastes of the Arabian desert, from the borders of which issued the hordes of Saracens like swarms of locusts. And the fall of Chosroes, the Persian king, may well be represented as the opening of the bottomless pit, inasmuch as it prepared the way for the followers of Mohammed to issue from their obscure country, and propagate their delusive doctrines with fire and sword, till they had spread their darkness over all the Eastern empire.

VERSE 2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

"Like the noxious and even deadly vapor which the winds, particularly from the south-west, diffuse in Arabia, Mohammedanism spread from thence its pestilential influence,—arose as suddenly, and spread as widely, as smoke arising out of the pit, the smoke of a great furnace. Such is a suitable symbol of the religion of Mohammed, of itself, or as compared with the pure light of the gospel of Jesus. It was not like the latter, a light from Heaven, but a smoke out of the bottomless pit."

VERSE 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

"A false religion was set up, which, although the scourge of transgressions and idolatry, filled the

world with darkness and delusion; and swarms of Saracens, like locusts, overspread the earth, and speedily extended their ravages over the Roman empire, from east to west. The hail descended from the frozen shores of the Baltic; the burning mountain fell upon the sea from Africa; and the locusts (the fit symbol of the Arabs) issued from Arabia, their native region. They came as destroyers, propagating a new doctrine, and stirred up to rapine and violence by motives of interest and religion.

"A still more specific illustration may be given of the power, like unto that of scorpions, which was given them. Not only was their attack speedy and vigorous, but 'the nice sensibility of honor, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, sheds its deadly venom on the quarrels of the Arabs:—an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender; and such is their patient inveteracy that they expect whole months and years the opportunity of revenge.'"

VERSE 4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

After the death of Mohammed, he was succeeded in the command by Abubeker, A. D. 632, who, as soon as he had fairly established his authority and government, dispatched a circular letter to the

Arabian tribes, from which the following is an extract:—

"'When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women and children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way; let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries; and you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute.'

"It is not said in prophecy or in history that the more humane injunctions were as scrupulously obeyed as the ferocious mandate. But it was so commanded them. And the preceding are the only instructions recorded by Gibbon, as given by Abubeker to the chiefs whose duty it was to issue the commands to all the Saracen hosts. The commands are alike discriminating with the prediction; as if the caliph himself had been acting in known, as well as direct, obedience to a higher mandate than that of mortal man—and in the very act of going forth to fight against the religion of Jesus, and to

propagate Mohammedanism in its stead, he repeated the words which it was foretold in the Revelation of Jesus Christ that he would say."

The Seal of God in their Foreheads. In remarks upon chapter 7: 1–3, we have shown that the seal of God is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. And history is not silent upon the fact that there have been observers of the true Sabbath all through the present dispensation. But the question has here arisen with many, Who were those men which, at this time, had the seal of God in their foreheads, and who thereby became exempt from Mohammedan oppression? Let the reader bear in mind the fact already alluded to, that there have been those all through this dispensation, who have had the seal of God in their foreheads, or have been intelligent observers of the true Sabbath; and let him consider further that what the prophecy asserts is that the attacks of this desolating Turkish power are not directed against them, but against another class. The subject is thus freed from all difficulty; for this is all that the prophecy really asserts. Only one class of persons is directly brought to view in the text; namely, those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; and the preservation of those who have the seal of God is brought in only by implication. Accordingly, we do not learn from history that any of these were involved in any of the calamities inflicted by the Saracens upon the objects of their hate. They were commissioned against another class of men. And the destruction

to come upon this class of men is not put in contrast with the preservation of other men, but only with that of the fruits and verdure of the earth; thus, hurt not the grass, trees, nor any green thing, but only a certain class of men. And in fulfillment, we have the strange spectacle of an army of invaders sparing those things which such armies usually destroy, namely, the face and productions of nature, and, in pursuance of their permission to hurt those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, cleaving the skulls of a class of religionists with shaven crowns, who belonged to the synagogue of Satan.

These were doubtless a class of monks, or some other division of the Roman Catholic church. Against these the arms of the Mohammedans were directed. And it seems to us that there is a peculiar fitness, if not design, in describing them as those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, inasmuch as that is the very church which has robbed the law of God of its seal, by tearing away the true Sabbath, and erecting a counterfeit in its place. And we do not understand, either from the prophecy or from history, that those persons whom Abubeker charged his followers not to molest were in possession of the seal of God, or necessarily constituted the people of God. Who they were, and for what reason they were spared, the meager testimony of Gibbon does not inform us, and we have no other means of knowing. But we have every reason to believe that none of those who had the

seal of God were molested, while another class, who emphatically had it not, were put to the sword. And thus the specifications of the prophecy are amply met.

VERSE 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.

"Their constant incursions into the Roman territory, and frequent assaults on Constantinople itself, were an unceasing torment throughout the empire, which yet they were not able effectually to subdue, notwithstanding the long period, afterward more directly alluded to, during which they continued, by unremitting attacks, grievously to afflict an idolatrous church, of which the pope was the head. Their charge was to torment, and then to hurt, but not to kill, or utterly destroy. The marvel was that they did not." In reference to the five months, see on verse 10.

VERSE 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

"Men were weary of life, when life was spared only for a renewal of woe, and when all that they accounted sacred was violated, and all that they held dear constantly endangered, and the savage Saracens domineered over them, or left them only to a momentary repose, ever liable to be suddenly or violently interrupted, as if by the sting of a scorpion."

VERSE 7. **And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.**

"The Arabian horse takes the lead throughout the world; and skill in horsemanship is the art and science of Arabia. And the barbed Arabs, swift as locusts and armed like scorpions, ready to dart away in a moment, were ever prepared unto battle.

"And on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold. When Mohammed entered Medina (A. D. 622), and was first received as its prince, 'a turban was unfurled before him to supply the deficiency of a standard.' The turbans of the Saracens, like unto a coronet, were their ornament and their boast. The rich booty abundantly supplied and frequently renewed them. To assume the turban, is proverbially to turn Mussulman. And the Arabs were anciently distinguished by the mitres which they wore.

"And their faces were as the faces of men. 'The gravity and firmness of the mind of the Arab is conspicuous in his outward demeanor,—his only gesture is that of stroking his beard, the venerable symbol of manhood.' 'The honor of their beards is most easily wounded.'"

VERSE 8. **And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.**

"Long hair" is esteemed an ornament by women. The Arabs, unlike to other men, had their hair as the hair of women, or uncut, as their practice is recorded by Pliny and others. But there was nothing

effeminate in their character; for, as denoting their ferocity and strength to devour, their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

VERSE 9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

The Breastplate. "The cuirass (or breastplate) was in use among the Arabs in the days of Mohammed. In the battle of Ohud (the second which Mohammed fought) with the Koreish of Mecca (A. D. 624), 'seven hundred of them were armed with cuirasses.'"

The Sound of their Wings. "The charge of the Arabs was not like that of the Greeks and Romans, the efforts of a firm and compact infantry: their military force was chiefly formed of cavalry and archers. With a touch of the hand, the Arab horses darted away with the swiftness of the wind. The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. Their conquests were marvelous, both in rapidity and extent, and their attack was instantaneous. Nor was it less successful against the Romans than the Persians.

VERSE 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Thus far Keith has furnished us with illustrations of the sounding of the first five trumpets. But

we must now take leave of him, and proceed to the application of the new feature of the prophecy here introduced, namely, the prophetic periods.

Their Power was to Hurt Men Five Months. 1. The question arises, What men were they to hurt five months? Undoubtedly, the same they were afterward to slay (see verse 15); "the third part of men," or third of the Roman empire,—the Greek division of it.

2. When were they to begin their work of torment? The 11th verse answers the question:—

1. "They had a king over them." From the death of Mohammed until near the close of the 13th century, the Mohammedans were divided into various factions, under several leaders, with no *general* civil government extending over them all. Near the close of the 13th century, Othman founded a government, which has since been known as the Ottoman government, or empire, extending over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one grand monarchy.

2. The character of the king. "Which is the angel of the bottomless pit." An angel signifies a messenger, or minister, either good or bad; not always a spiritual being. "The angel of the bottomless pit," or chief minister of the religion which came from thence when it was opened. That religion is Mohammedanism, and the Sultan is its chief minister. "The Sultan, or Grand Signior, as he is indifferently called, is also Supreme Caliph, or high priest, uniting in his person the highest spirit-

ual dignity with the supreme secular authority."—*World as It Is*, p. 361.

3. His name. In Hebrew, "Abaddon," the destroyer; in Greek, "Apollyon," one that exterminates or destroys. Having two different names in two languages, it is evident that the character, rather than the name of the power, is intended to be represented. If so, in both languages he is a destroyer. Such has always been the character of the Ottoman government.

But *when* did Othman make his first assault on the Greek empire? According to Gibbon ("Decline and Fall," etc.), "Othman first entered the territory of Nicomedia on the 27th day of July, 1299."

The calculations of some writers have gone upon the supposition that the period should begin with the foundation of the Ottoman empire; but this is evidently an error; for they not only were to have a king over them, but were to torment men five months. But the period of torment could not begin before the first attack of the tormentors, which was as above, July 27, 1299.

The calculation which follows, founded on this starting point, was made and published in a work entitled, "Christ's Second Coming," etc., by J. Litch, in 1838.

"And their power was to hurt men five months." Thus far their commission extended, to torment, by constant depredations, but not politically to kill them. "Five months," thirty days to a month, give us one hundred and fifty days; and these being

prophetic, signify one hundred and fifty years. Commencing July 27, 1299, the one hundred and fifty years reach to 1449. During that whole period the Turks were engaged in an almost perpetual warfare with the Greek empire, but yet *without conquering it.* They seized upon and held several of the Greek provinces, but still Greek independence was maintained in Constantinople. But in 1449, the termination of the one hundred and fifty years, a change came, the history of which will be found under the succeeding trumpet.

VERSE 12. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. 13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

The first woe was to continue from the rise of Mohammedanism until the end of the five months. Then the first woe was to end, and the second to begin. And when the sixth angel sounded, it was commanded to take off the restraints which had been imposed on the nation, by which they were restricted to the work of tormenting men, and their commission was enlarged so as to permit them to slay the third part of men. This command came from the four horns of the golden altar.

The Four Angels. These were the four principal sultanies of which the Ottoman empire was com-

posed, located in the country watered by the great river Euphrates. These sultanies were situated at Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad. Previously they had been restrained; but God commanded, and they were loosed.

In the year 1449, John Palæologus, the Greek emperor, died, but left no children to inherit his throne, and Constantine, his brother, succeeded to it.* But he would not venture to ascend the throne without the consent of Amurath, the Turkish Sultan. He therefore sent ambassadors to ask his consent, and obtained it, before he presumed to call himself sovereign.

Let this historical fact be carefully examined in connection with the prediction above. This was not a violent assault made on the Greeks, by which their empire was overthrown and their independence taken away, but simply a voluntary surrender of that independence into the hands of the Turks, by saying, "I cannot reign unless you permit."

The four angels were loosed for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men. This period amounts to three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days; during which Ottoman supremacy was to exist in Constantinople. Thus: A prophetic year is three hundred and sixty prophetic days, or three hundred and sixty literal years; a prophetic month, thirty prophetic days, is thirty

*Some historians have given this date as 1448, but the best authorities sustain the date here given, 1449. See Chamber's Encyclopedia, art., Palæologus.

literal years; one prophetic day, is one literal year; and an hour, or the twenty-fourth part of a prophetic day, would be a twenty-fourth part of a literal year, or fifteen days; the whole amounting to three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days.

But although the four angels were thus loosed by the voluntary submission of the Greeks, yet another doom awaited the seat of empire. Amurath, the Sultan to whom the submission of Constantine XII. was made, and by whose permission he reigned in Constantinople, soon after died and was succeeded in the empire, in 1451, by Mohammed II., who set his heart on Constantinople, and determined to make it a prey. He accordingly made preparations for besieging and taking the city. The siege commenced on the 6th of April, 1453, and ended in the taking of the city, and the death of the last of the Constantines, on the 16th day of May following. And the eastern city of the Cæsars became the seat of the Ottoman empire.

The arms and mode of warfare which were used in the siege in which Constantinople was to be overthrown and held in subjection, were, as we shall see, distinctly noticed by the Revelator.

Verse 16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them.

Innumerable hordes of horses and them that sat on them. Gibbon describes the first invasion of the Roman territories by the Turks, thus: "The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six

hundred miles from Tauris to Azeroum, and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian Prophet." Whether the number is designed to convey the idea of any definite number, the reader must judge. Some suppose 200,000 twice told is meant, and, following some historians, they find that number of Turkish warriors in the siege of Constantinople. Some think 200,000,000 to mean all the Turkish warriors during the 391 years and fifteen days of their triumph over the Greeks. This appears the most likely. But as it cannot be ascertained whether that is the fact or not, nothing can be affirmed on the point.

VERSE 17. **And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.**

The first part of this description may have reference to the appearance of these horsemen. Fire, representing a color, stands for red—"as red as fire" being a frequent form of expression; jacinth, or hyacinth, for blue; and brimstone for yellow; and these colors greatly predominated in the dress of these warriors; so that the description, according to this view, would be accurately met in the Turkish uniform, which was composed largely of red or scarlet, blue and yellow. The heads of the horses were, in appearance, as the heads of lions, to denote their strength, courage, and fierceness. While the last part of the verse undoubtedly has reference to the use of gun-

powder and fire-arms for purposes of war, which were then but recently introduced. As the Turks discharged their fire-arms on horseback, it would appear to the distant beholder that the fire, smoke, and brimstone, issued out of the horses' mouths, as illustrated by plate facing p. 198.*

VERSE 18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

These verses express the deadly effect of the new mode of warfare introduced. It was by means of these agents, gunpowder, fire-arms and cannon, that Constantinople was finally overcome and given into the hands of the Turks.

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*Quite an agreement exists among commentators in applying the prophecy concerning the fire, smoke, and brimstone, to the use of gunpowder by the Turks in their warfare against the Eastern Empire. See Clarke, Barnes, Elliot, Cottage Bible, etc. But they generally allude simply to the heavy ordnance, the large cannon, employed by that power; whereas the prophecy mentions especially the "horses" and the fire "issuing from their mouths," as though smaller arms were used, and used on horseback. Barnes thinks this was the case; and a statement from Gibbon confirms this view. He says (iv., 343): "The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire, of their musketry and cannon." Here is good historical evidence that muskets were used by the Turks; and, secondly, it is undisputed that in their general warfare they fought principally on horseback. The inference is therefore well supported that they used fire-arms on horseback, accurately fulfilling the prophecy, according to the illustration above referred to.

In addition to the fire, smoke, and brimstone, which apparently issued out of their mouths, it is said that their power was also in their tails. It is a remarkable fact that the horse's tail is a well-known Turkish standard, a symbol of office and authority. The meaning of the expression would seem to be, that their tails were the symbol or emblem of their authority. The image before the mind of John would seem to have been that he saw the horses belching out fire and smoke, and, what was equally strange, he saw that their power of spreading desolation was connected with the tails of the horses. Any one looking on a body of cavalry with such banners or ensigns, would be struck with this unusual or remarkable appearance, and would speak of their banners as concentrating and directing their power.

This supremacy of the Mohammedans over the Greeks was to continue, as already noticed, three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. Commencing when the one hundred and fifty years ended, July 27, 1449, the period would end August 11, 1840. Judging from the manner of the commencement of the Ottoman supremacy, that it was by a voluntary acknowledgment on the part of the Greek emperor that he only reigned by permission of the Turkish Sultan, we should naturally conclude that the fall or departure of the Ottoman independence would be brought about in the same way; that at the end of the specified period, the Sultan would voluntarily surrender his independence into

the hands of the Christian powers, from whom he received it.

When the foregoing calculation was made by Elder J. Litch in 1838, it was purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture. Now, however, the time is passed by, and it is proper to inquire, what the result has been—whether such events transpired according to the previous calculation.

When Did Mohammedan Independence in Constantinople Depart? For several years previous to 1840, the Sultan had been embroiled in war with Mehemet Ali, Pacha of Egypt. In 1838 there was a threatening of war between the Sultan and his Egyptian vassal, which was for the time being restrained by the influence of the foreign ambassadors. In 1839, however, hostilities were again commenced, and were prosecuted until, in a general battle between the armies of the Sultan and Mehemet, the Sultan's army was entirely cut up and destroyed, and his fleet taken by Mehemet and carried into Egypt. So completely had the Sultan's fleet been reduced, that, when the war again commenced in August he had only two first-rates and three frigates, as the sad remains of the once powerful Turkish fleet. This fleet Mehemet positively refused to give up and return to the Sultan, and declared that if the powers attempted to take it from him, he would burn it. In this posture affairs stood, when, in 1840, England, Russia, Austria and Prussia, interposed, and determined on a settlement of

the difficulty; for it was evident, if let alone, Mehemet would soon become master of the Sultan's throne.

The Sultan accepted this intervention of the great powers, and thus made a voluntary surrender of the question into their hands. A conference of these powers was held in London, Sheikh Effendendi, the Ottoman Plenipotentiary, being present. At this conference an ultimatum was drawn up to be presented to the Pacha of Egypt, whereby the Sultan was to offer him the hereditary government of Egypt, and all that part of Syria extending from the gulf of Suez to the lake of Tiberias, together with the province of Acre, for life; he, on his part, to evacuate all other parts of the Sultan's dominions then occupied by him, and to return the Ottoman fleet. In case he refused this offer from the Sultan, the four powers were to take the matter into their own hands, and use such other means to bring him to terms as they should see fit.

It is apparent that just as soon as this ultimatum should be put by the Sultan into the hands of Mehemet Ali, the matter would be forever beyond the control of the former, and the disposal of his affairs would, from that moment, be in the hands of foreign powers. The Sultan dispatched Rifat Bey on a government steamer to Alexandria to communicate the ultimatum to the Pacha. It was put into his hands and by him taken in charge, *on the eleventh day of August*, 1840. On the same day a note was addressed by the Sultan to the ambassadors of the

four powers, inquiring what plan was to be adopted in case the Pacha should refuse to comply with the terms of the ultimatum; to which they made answer that provision had been made, and there was no necessity of his alarming himself about any contingency that might arise. This day the period of three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days allotted to the continuance of the Ottoman power, ended; and where was the Sultan's independence? *Gone!* Who had the supremacy of the Ottoman empire in their hands? The four great powers; and that empire has existed ever since only by the sufferance of these Christian powers. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled to the very letter.

From the first publication of the calculation of this matter in 1838, before referred to, the time set for the fulfillment of the prophecy, August 11, 1840, was watched by thousands with intense interest. And the exact accomplishment of the event predicted, showing as it did, the right application of the prophecy, gave a mighty impetus to the great Advent movement, then beginning to attract the attention of the world.

VERSE 20. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. 21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

God designs that men shall make a note of his

judgments, and receive the lessons he thereby designs to convey. But how slow are they to learn! and how blind to the indications of providence! The events that transpired under the sixth trumpet constituted the second woe. Yet these judgments led to no improvement in the manners and morals of men. Those who escaped them learned nothing by their manifestation in the earth. The worship of devils (demons, dead folks deified) and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, may find a fulfillment in the *saint* worship and *image* worship of the Roman Catholic church; while of murders, sorceries (pretended miracles through the agency of departed saints), fornications, and thefts, in countries where the Roman religion has prevailed, there has been no lack.

The hordes of Saracens and Turks were let loose as a scourge and punishment upon apostate Christendom. Men suffered the punishment, but learned therefrom no lesson.

Chapter X.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE ADVENT.

Verse 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2; And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

A Parenthetical Prophecy. Chapter 9 closed with the events of the sixth trumpet. The sounding of the seventh trumpet is not introduced till we reach the 15th verse of chapter 11. The whole of chapter 10, and a portion of chapter 11, therefore, come in parenthetically between the sixth and seventh trumpets. That which is particularly connected with the sounding of the sixth trumpet is recorded in chapter 9. The prophet has other events to introduce before the opening of another trumpet, and takes occasion to do it in the scripture which intervenes to the 15th verse of chapter 11. Among these is the prophecy of chapter 10. Let us first look at the chronology of the message of this angel.

The Little Book. "He had in his hand a little book *open*." There is a necessary inference to be drawn from this language, which is that this book

was at some time closed up. We read in Daniel of a book which was closed up and sealed to a certain time. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan. 12: 4. Since this book was closed up only *till* the time of the end, it follows that *at* the time of the end the book would be opened; and as its closing was mentioned in prophecy, it would be but reasonable to expect that in the predictions of events to take place at the time of the end the opening of this book would also be mentioned. There is no book spoken of as closed up and sealed except the book of Daniel's prophecy; and there is no account of the opening of that book, unless it be here in the 10th of Revelation. We see, furthermore, that the contents ascribed to the book in both places, are the same. The book which Daniel had directions to close up and seal had reference to time: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" And when the angel of this chapter comes down with the little book open, on which he bases his proclamation, he gives a message in relation to time: "Time shall be no longer." Nothing more could be required to establish the identity of these two books, and to show that the little book which the angel had in his hand open, was the book of the prophecy of Daniel.

An important point is now determined toward settling the chronology of this angel; for we have seen that the prophecy, more particularly the pro-

phetic periods of Daniel, were not to be opened till the time of the end; and if this is the book which the angel had in his hand *open*, it follows that he proclaims his message this side of the time when the book should be opened, or somewhere this side of the commencement of the time of the end. All that now remains on this point is to ascertain when the time of the end commenced; and the book of Daniel itself furnishes data from which this can be done. In Daniel 11, from verse 30, the papal power is brought to view. In verse 35, we read, "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and make them white, *even to the time of the end.*" Here is brought to view the period of the supremacy of the little horn, during which time the saints, times, and laws, were to be given into his hand, and from him suffer fearful persecutions. This is declared to reach to the time of the end. It ended A. D. 1798, where the 1260 years of papal rule expired. There the time of the end commenced, and the book was opened. And since that time many have run to and fro, and knowledge on these prophetic subjects has marvelously increased.

The chronology of the events of Rev. 10, is further ascertained from the fact that this angel is identical with the first angel of Rev. 14. The points of identity between them are easily seen. 1. They both have a special message to proclaim. 2. They both utter their proclamation with a loud voice. 3. They use similar language, both referring to the great Creator, as the maker of heaven and earth,

the sea, and the things that are therein. 4. They both proclaim time; one swearing that time should be no more, and the other proclaiming that the hour of God's Judgment has come. But the message of Rev. 14: 6, is located this side of the commencement of the time of the end. It is a proclamation of the hour of God's Judgment come, and hence must have its application to the last generation. Paul did not preach the hour of Judgment come. Luther and his coadjutors did not preach it. Paul reasoned of a Judgment to come, indefinitely future; and Luther placed it at least three hundred years off from his day. Moreover Paul warned the church against any such preaching as that the hour of God's Judgment has come, until a certain time. In 2 Thess. 2: 1–3, he says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that *man of sin be revealed*, the son of perdition," etc. Here Paul introduces to our view the man of sin, the little horn, the papacy, and covers with a caution the whole period of his supremacy, which, as already noticed, continued 1260 years, ending in 1798. In 1798, therefore, the restriction from proclaiming the day of Christ at hand, ceased; in 1798, the time of the end commenced, and the seal was taken

from the little book. Since that period, therefore, the angel of Rev. 14, goes forth proclaiming the hour of God's Judgment come, and since that time, too, the angel of chapter 10 takes his stand on sea and land, and swears that time shall be no more. Of their identity there can now be no question; and all the arguments which go to locate the one, are equally effective in the case of the other. We need not enter into any argument here to show that the present generation has witnessed the fulfillment of these two prophecies. In the preaching of the advent, more especially from 1840 to 1844, they met a full and circumstantial accomplishment. The position of this angel, one foot upon the sea, and the other on the land, denotes the wide extent of his proclamation by sea and by land. Had this message been designed for only one country, it would have been sufficient for the angel to take his position on the land only. But he has one foot upon the sea; from which we may infer that his message would cross the oceans and extend to the various nations and divisions of the globe. And this inference is strengthened by the fact that the Advent proclamation above referred to, did go to every missionary station in the world.

VERSE 3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

The Seven Thunders. It would be vain to speculate to any great length upon the seven thunders, in hope of gaining a definite knowlege of what they uttered. We must acquiesce in the directions given to John concerning them and leave them where he left them, sealed up, unwritten, and consequently to us unknown. There is, however, a conjecture extant in relation to them, which may not inappropriately be mentioned here. It is that what the seven thunders uttered is the experience of the Advent people, embracing their sore disappointment and trial. Something, evidently, was uttered, which it would not be well for the church to know; and for God to have given an inspired record of the Advent movement in advance, would have been simply to defeat that movement which we verily believe was in all its particulars an accomplishment of his purposes, and according to his will. Why then any mention of the seven thunders at all? Following out the above-noticed conjecture, the conclusion would be, that we, having met in our history with sudden, mysterious and unexpected events, as startling and strange as thunders from an unclouded sky, might not give up in utter perplexity, inferring, as we may, that all is in the order and providence of God, since something of this nature was sealed up and hidden from the church.

VERSE 5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6, And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and

the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

Time Shall be no More. What is the meaning of this solemn declaration? It cannot mean that with the message of this angel, time, as here computed, in comparison with eternity, should end; for the next verse speaks of the *days* of the voice of the seventh angel; and chapter 11: 15–19, gives us some of the events to take place under this trumpet, which transpire in the present state. And it cannot mean probationary time; for that does not cease till Christ closes his work as priest, which is not till after the seventh angel has commenced to sound. Rev. 11: 19. It must therefore mean prophetic time, for there is no other to which it can refer. Prophetic time shall be no more; not that time should never be used in a prophetic sense; for the "days of the voice of the seventh angel," spoken of immediately after, doubtless mean the *years* of the seventh angel; but no prophetic period should extend beyond this message; those that reach to the latest point should all close there. Arguments on the prophetic periods to show that the longest ones did not extend beyond the autumn of 1844, will be found in Thoughts on Daniel 8: 14.

VERSE 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

The Days of the Voice of the Seventh Angel. This seventh trump is not that which is spoken of as the last trump, in 1 Cor. 15: 52, which wakes the sleep-

ing dead; but it is the seventh of the series of the seven trumpets, and like the others of the series, occupies days [years] in sounding. In the days when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. Not in the day when he shall begin to sound, not in the very commencement of his sounding; but in the early years of his sounding, the mystery of God shall be finished.

Commencement of the Seventh Trumpet. From the events to take place under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, its commencement may be located with sufficient definiteness at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. Not many years from that date, then, the mystery of God is to be finished. The great event, whatever it is, is right upon us. Some closing and decisive work, with whatever of importance and solemnity it bears in its train, is near at hand. There is an importance connected with the finishing of any of the works of God. Such an act marks a solemn and important era. Our Saviour, when expiring upon the cross, cried, It is finished, John 19: 30, and when the great work of mercy for fallen man is completed, it will be announced by a voice from the throne of God, proclaiming, in tones which roll like thunder through all the earth, the solemn sentence, It is done! Rev. 16: 17. It is therefore no uncalled-for solicitude which prompts us to inquire what bearing such events have upon our eternal hopes and interests, and when we read of the finishing of the mystery of God, to ask what that mystery is, and in what its finishing consists.

The Mystery of God. A few direct testimonies from that Book which has been given as a lamp to our feet, will show what this mystery is. Eph. 1: 9: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and on earth, even in him." Here God's purpose to gather together all into Christ is called the "mystery" of his will. This is accomplished through the gospel. Eph. 6: 19: "And for me [Paul asks that prayers might be made] that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." Here the gospel is declared plainly to be a mystery. It is called in Col. 4: 3, the mystery of Christ. Eph. 3: 3, 6. "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words)," etc., "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." Paul here declares that the mystery was made known to him by revelation, as he had before written. In this he refers to his epistle to the Galatians, where he had recorded what had been given "by revelation," in these words: "But I certify you, brethren, that the *gospel* which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but *by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Gal. 1: 11, 12. Here Paul tells us plainly that what

he received through revelation, was the gospel. In Eph. 3: 3, he calls it the *mystery* made known to him by revelation, as he had written before. The epistle to the Galatians was written in A. D. 58, and that to the Ephesians in A. D. 64.

In view of these testimonies, few will be disposed to deny that the mystery of God is the gospel. It is the same, then, as if the angel had declared, In the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound, the *gospel* shall be finished. But what is the finishing of the gospel? Let us first inquire for what it was given? It was given to take out from the nations a people for God's name. Acts 15: 14. Its finishing must, as a matter of course, be the close of this work. It will be finished when the number of God's people is made up, mercy ceases to be offered, and probation closes.

The subject is now before us in all its magnitude. Such is the momentous work to be accomplished in the early days of the voice of the seventh angel, whose trumpet notes have already been reverberating through the world nearly forty years. God is not slack; his work is not uncertain; are we ready for the issue?

VERSE 8. And the voice which I heard from Heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate

it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

In verse 8 John himself is brought in to act a part as a representative of the church, probably on account of the succeeding peculiar experience of the church which the Lord of the prophecy would cause to be put on record, but which could not well be presented under the symbol of an angel. When only a straightforward proclamation is brought to view, without including the peculiar experience which the church is to pass through in connection therewith, angels may be used as symbols to represent the religious teachers who proclaim that message, as in Rev. 14. But when some particular experience of the church is to be presented, the case is manifestly different. This could most appropriately be set forth in the person of some member of the human family; hence John is himself called upon to act a part in this symbolic representation. And this being the case, the angel who here appeared to John may represent that divine messenger who, in the order which is observed in all the work of God, has charge of this message; or he may be introduced for the purpose of representing the nature of the message and the source from which it comes.

There are not a few now living who have in their own experience met a striking fulfillment of these verses, in the joy with which they received the message of Christ's immediate second coming, the honey-like sweetness of the precious truths then brought

out, and the bitterness and sorrow that followed when the disappointment, and not the Lord, came, at the appointed time in 1844. A mistake had been made which apparently involved the integrity of the little book they had been eating. What had been so like honey to their taste, suddenly became like wormwood and gall. But those who had patience to endure the digesting process, soon learned that the mistake was only in the event, not in the time, and that what the angel had given them was not unto death, but to their nourishment and support. See the same facts brought to view under a similar figure in Jer. 15: 16–18.

VERSE 11. **And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.**

John, standing as the representative of the church, here receives from the angel another commission. Another message is to go forth after the time when the first and second messages, as leading proclamations, ceased. In other words, we have here a prophecy of the third angel's message, now, as we believe, being fulfilled. Neither will this work be done in a corner; for it is to go before "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Chapter XI.

THE TWO WITNESSES.

Verse 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

We here have a continuation of the instruction which the angel commenced giving to John in the preceding chapter; hence these verses properly belong to that chapter, and should not be separated by the present division. In the last verse of chapter 10, the angel gave to John, as a representative of the church, a new commission. In other words, as already shown, we have in that verse a prophecy of the third angel's message. Now follows testimony showing what the nature of that message is to be. It is connected with the temple of God in Heaven, and is designed to fit up a class of people as worshipers therein. The temple here cannot mean the church; for the church is brought to view in connection with this temple as "them that worship therein." The temple is therefore the literal temple in Heaven, and the worshipers the

true church on earth. But of course these worshipers are not to be measured in the sense of ascertaining the height and circumference of each one in feet and inches; they are to be measured as *worshipers;* and character can be measured only by some standard of right, namely, a law or rule of action. We are thus brought to the conclusion that the ten commandments, the standard which God has given by which to measure "the whole duty of man," are embraced in the measuring rod put by the angel into the hands of John; and this is the very thing which, in fulfillment, has been put under the third message, into the hands of the church. This is the standard by which the worshipers of God are now to be tested.

Having seen what it is to measure those who worship at the temple, we inquire further, What is meant by measuring the temple? To measure any object, requires that we give especial attention to that object. So doubtless the call to rise and measure the temple of God, is a prophetic command to the church to give the subject of the temple or sanctuary a special examination. But how is it to be measured with the measuring rod given to the church? With the ten commandments alone we could not do it. We do do it with the message. Hence we conclude that the measuring rod, taken as a whole, is the special message now given to the church, which embraces all the truths peculiar to this time, including the ten commandments. By this message, our attention has been called to the

temple above, and through it the light and truth on this subject has come out. Thus we measure the temple and the altar, or the ministration connected with the temple, the work and position of our great High Priest; and we measure the worshipers with that portion of the rod which relates to character, namely, the ten commandments.

"But the court which is without the temple leave out." As much as to say, The attention of the church is now directed to the inner temple, and the service there. Matters pertaining to the court are of less consequence now. It is given to the Gentiles. That the court refers to this earth is proved thus: The court is the place where the victims were slain, whose blood was to be administered in the sanctuary. The antitypical victim must die in the antitypical court; and he died on Calvary in Judea. Having thus introduced the Gentiles, the attention of the prophet is directed to the great feature of Gentile apostasy, namely, the treading down of the holy city forty and two months, during the period of papal supremacy. He is then directed to the condition of the word of God, the truth and the church during that time. Thus by an easy and natural transition, we are carried back into the past, and our attention is called to a new series of events.

VERSE 3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

These days are the same as the forty-two months

of the preceding verse, and refer to the period of papal triumph. During this time the witnesses are in a state of sackcloth, or obscurity, and God gives them power to endure and maintain their testimony through that dark and dismal period. But who or what are these witnesses?

VERSE 4. **These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.**

Evident allusion is here made to Zech. 4: 3–6, where it is explained that the two olive trees are taken to represent the word of God; and David testifies, "The entrance of thy words giveth light," and "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Written testimony is stronger than oral. Jesus declares of the Old Testament scriptures, "They are they which testify of me." In this dispensation he says that his works bear witness of him. By what means do they bear witness of him? Ever since those disciples of his who were personally associated with him while on earth, passed off the stage of life, his works have borne witness of him only through the medium of the New Testament, where alone we find them recorded. This gospel of the kingdom, it was once declared, shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, etc.

These declarations and considerations are sufficient to sustain the conclusion that the Old and New Testaments, one given in one dispensation, and the other in the other, are Christ's two witnesses.

VERSE 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

To hurt the word of God is to oppose, corrupt, or pervert its testimony, and turn people away from it. Against those who do this work, fire proceedeth out of their mouth to devour them; that is judgment of fire is denounced in that word against such. It declares that they will have their portion at last in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Mal. 4: 1; Rev. 20: 15; 22: 18, 19, etc.

VERSE 6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.

In what sense have these witnesses power to shut heaven, turn waters to blood, and bring plagues on the earth? Elijah shut heaven that it rained not for three years and a half; but he did it by the word of the Lord. Moses by the word of the Lord turned the waters of Egypt to blood. And just as these judgments, recorded in their testimony, have been fulfilled, so will every threatening and judgment denounced by them against any people surely be accomplished. "As often as they will." As often as judgments are recorded on their pages to transpire, so often they will come to pass. An instance of this the world is yet to experience in the infliction of the seven last plagues.

VERSE 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit

shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them. 8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

"When they shall have *finished* their testimony" —that is, "in *sackcloth*;" or, as the original signifies, when they are "*fiinishing*," etc., just as they are coming to the termination of their sackcloth state. A "beast," in prophecy, denotes a kingdom or power. See Dan. 7: 17, 23. The question now arises, When did the sackcloth state of the witnesses close? and did such a kingdom as described make war on them at the time spoken of? If we are correct in fixing upon A. D. 538 as the time of the commencement of the sackcloth state, forty-two months being 1260 prophetic days, or years, would bring us down to A. D. 1798. About this time, then, did such a kingdom as described appear and make war on them, etc.? Mark! this beast, or kingdom, is out of the bottomless pit—no foundation—an atheistical power—"spiritually Egypt." See Exodus 5: 2,—"And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Here is atheism. Did any kingdom *about* 1798, manifest the same spirit? Yes, France; she denied the being of God in her national capacity, and made war on the "Monarchy of Heaven."

"Spiritually" this power "is called Sodom." What was the characteristic sin of Sodom? *Licentiousness.* Did France have this character? She

did—*fornication* was established *by law* during the period spoken of. "Spiritually" the place was "where our Lord was crucified." Was this true in France? It was, in more senses than one. *First*, in 1572 a plot was laid in France to destroy all the pious Huguenots; and in one night, *fifty thousand* of them were murdered in cold blood, and the streets of Paris literally ran with blood. Thus our Lord was "spiritually crucified" in his members. *Again*, the watchword and motto of the French infidels was, "CRUSH THE WRETCH," meaning Christ. Thus it may be truly said "where our Lord was crucified." The very spirit of the "bottomless pit" was poured out in that wicked nation.

But did France "make war" on the Bible? She did; and in 1793 a decree passed the French Assembly, forbidding the Bible; and under that decree, the Bibles were gathered and burned, and every possible mark of contempt heaped upon them, and all the institutions of the Bible were abolished; the Sabbath was blotted out, and every *tenth* day substituted for mirth and profanity. Baptism and the communion were abolished. The being of God was denied; and death pronounced to be an *eternal* sleep. The Goddess of Reason was set up, in the person of a vile woman, and publicly worshiped. Surely here is a power that exactly answers the prophecy. But let us examine this point still further.

VERSE 9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days

and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The language of this verse denotes the feelings of the nations besides the one committing the outrage on the witnesses. They would see what war infidel France had made on the Bible, but would not be led, nationally to engage in the wicked work, nor suffer the murdered witnesses to be *buried*, or put out of sight among themselves, though they lay dead three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, in France. No, this very attempt of France served to arouse Christians everywhere to put forth a new exertion in behalf of the Bible, as we shall presently see.

VERSE 10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth.

This denotes the joy those felt who hated the Bible, or were tormented by it. Great was the joy of infidels everywhere for awhile. But the "triumphing of the wicked is short:" so was it in France; for their war on the Bible and Christianity had well nigh swallowed them all up. They set out to destroy Christ's "two witnesses," but they filled France with blood and horror, so that they were horror-struck at the result of their own wicked deeds, and were glad to remove their impious hands from the Bible.

VERSE 11. And after three days and a half the Spirit of

life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

In 1793, the decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible. Just three years after, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly, going to supersede the decree, and giving toleration to the Scriptures. That resolution lay on the table six months, when it was taken up and passed without a dissenting vote. Thus, in just three years and a half, the witnesses "stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them." Nothing but the appalling results of the rejection of the Bible could have induced France to take its hands off these witnesses.

VERSE 12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

"Ascended up to Heaven." To understand this expression, see Dan. 4: 22: "Thy greatness is grown, and *reacheth unto heaven.*" Here we see that the expression signifies *great exaltation.* Have the Scriptures attained to such a state of exaltation as here indicated, since France made war upon them? They have. Shortly after, the British Bible Society was organized, then followed the American Bible Society, and these, with their almost innumerable auxiliaries, are scattering the Bible everywhere. The Bible has been translated into nearly 200 different languages, since that period, that it was never in before; and then the improvements in paper-making and printing within the last seventy-

five years, have given an impetus to the work of scattering Bibles which is without a parallel.

The Bible has been sent to the destitute, literally, by *ship-loads*. One vessel carried out from England fifty-nine tons of Bibles for the emancipated slaves in the West Indies. The Bible has risen to be respected by almost every one, whether saint or sinner. The infidel is ashamed to speak against that book, in decent company; he must go to the grogshop, or some other place of infamy, if he expects to find assenting hearers to his mad frothings against the Bible. It is exalted as above all price, and as the most invaluable blessing of God to man, next to his Son, and as the glorious *testimony* concerning that Son. Yes, the Scriptures may truly be said to be exalted "to Heaven in a cloud," a *cloud* being an emblem of heavenly dignity.

VERSE 13. **And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven.**

What city? See chapter 17:18: "And the *woman* which thou sawest, is that *great city* which reigneth over the kings [kingdoms] of the earth." That city is the *papal* Roman power. France is *one* of the "*ten* horns" that gave "their power and strength unto the [*papal*] beast;" or is one of the ten kingdoms that arose out of the western empire of Rome, as indicated by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, Daniel's ten-horned beast, and John's

ten-horned dragon. France, then, was "a tenth part of the city;" and was one of the strongest ministers of papal vengeance; but in this revolution it "fell," and with it fell the last *civil* messenger of papal fury. "And in the earthquake were slain of men, [margin, *names of men*, or TITLES *of men*], seven thousand." France made war, in her revolution of 1789 to '99, and onward, on all titles and nobility. It is said, by those who have examined the French records, that just seven thousand titles of men were abolished in that revolution. "And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven." Their God-dishonoring and Heaven-defying work filled France with such scenes of blood, carnage, and horror, as made even the infidels themselves to tremble, and stand aghast; and the "remnant" that escaped the horrors of that hour "gave glory to God," not willingly, but the God of Heaven caused this "wrath of man to praise him," by giving all the world to see that those who make war on Heaven, make graves for themselves; thus glory redounded to God by the very means that wicked men employed to tarnish that glory.

For many of the foregoing thoughts on the Two Witnesses we are indebted to an exposition of the subject of "The Two Witnesses," by the late George Storrs.

VERSE 14. **The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly.**

The series of seven trumpets is here again resumed. The second woe ended with the sixth

trumpet, August 11, 1840; and the third woe occurs under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which commenced in 1844.

Then where are we? "Behold!" that is to say, Mark it well, "the third woe cometh quickly." The fearful scenes of the second woe are past, and we are now under the sounding of the trumpet that brings the third and last woe. And shall we now look for peace and safety, a temporal millennium, a thousand years of righteousness and prosperity? Rather let us earnestly pray the Lord to awake the slumbering.

VERSE 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, 17, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

From the 15th verse to the end of the chapter we seem to be carried over the ground from the sounding of the seventh angel to the end, three distinct times. In the verses last quoted, the prophet glances forward to the full establishment of the kingdom of God. Although the seventh trumpet has begun to sound, we do not understand that the great voices in Heaven have yet proclaimed that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, except it be in anticipation of the speedy accomplishment of this fact;

but the seventh trumpet, like the preceding six, covers a period of time; and the transfer of the kingdoms from earthly powers to Him whose right it is to reign, is the principal event to occur in the early years of its sounding; hence this event, to the exclusion of all else, here engages the mind of the prophet. See remarks on verse 19. In the next verse John goes back, and takes up intervening events as follows:—

VERSE 18. **And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.**

"The nations were angry;" commencing with the wonderful revolution in Europe in 1848; and from that outburst of violence among the nations, their anger toward each other, their jealousy and envy, have been increasing ever since. Almost every paper shows the fearful degree to which they are now excited.

"And thy wrath is come." The wrath of God for the present generation is filled up in the seven last plagues, chapter 15: 1, which consequently must here be referred to, and which are soon to be poured out upon the earth.

"And the time of the dead that they should be judged." The great mass of the dead, that is the wicked, are still in their graves after the visitation of the plagues, and the close of this dispensation.

A work of judgment—of allotting to each one the punishment due to his crimes—is carried on in reference to them by the saints in conjunction with Christ, during the one thousand years following the first resurrection. 1 Cor. 6: 2; Rev. 20: 4. Inasmuch as this judgment of the dead follows the wrath of God, or seven last plagues, it would seem necessary to refer it to the one thousand years of judgment upon the wicked, above referred to.

"And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets." This carries us forward to the full possession of the heavenly inheritance at the end of the thousand years; for the full reward of the saints is not reached till they enter upon the possession of the new earth.

"And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth;" referring to the time when all the wicked will be forever devoured by those purifying fires which come down from God out of Heaven upon them, and which melt and renovate the earth. 2 Pet. 3: 7; Rev. 20: 9. By this we learn that the seventh trumpet reaches over to the end of the one thousand years. Momentous, startling, but yet joyous thought! that the trumpet is now sounding which is to see the final destruction of the wicked, and behold the saints clothed in a glorious immortality, safely instated on the earth made new.

Once more the prophet carries us back to the commencement of the trumpet in the following language:—

VERSE 19. And the temple of God was opened in Heaven,

and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Having introduced the seventh trumpet, in verse 15, the first great event that strikes the mind of the seer, is the transfer of the kingdom from earthly to heavenly rule. God takes to him his great power, and forever crushes the rebellion of this revolted earth, establishes Christ upon his own throne, and remains himself supreme over all. This picture being completed, we are pointed back in verse 18, to the state of the nations, the judgment to fall upon them, and the final destiny of both saints and sinners. This field of vision being scanned, we are taken back once more, in the verse now under notice, and our attention called to the close of the ministration of Christ, the last scene in the work of mercy for a guilty world. The temple is opened; the second apartment of the sanctuary is entered. We know it is the holy of holies that is here opened; for the ark is seen, and in that apartment alone the ark was deposited. This took place at the end of the 2300 days, when the sanctuary was to be cleansed, the time when the prophetic periods expired, and the seventh angel commenced to sound. Since then the people of God have seen by faith the open door in Heaven, and the ark of God's testament there. They are endeavoring to keep every precept of the holy law written upon the tables therein deposited. And that the tables of the law are there, just as in the ark in the sanctuary erected

by Moses, is evident from the terms which John uses in describing the ark. He calls it the "ark of his testament." The ark was called the ark of the covenant, or testament, because it was made for the express purpose of containing the tables of the testimony, or ten commandments. Ex. 25:16; 31:18; Deut. 10:2, 5. It was put to no other use, and owed its name solely to the fact that it contained the tables of the law. If the tables were not therein, it would not be the ark of his (God's) testament, and could not truthfully be so called. Yet John, beholding the ark in Heaven under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, still calls it the "ark of his testament," affording unanswerable proof that the law is still there, unaltered in one jot or tittle from the copy which for a time was committed to the care of men in the typical ark of Moses.

The followers of the prophetic word have also received the reed, and are measuring the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein. Verse 1. They are uttering their last prophecy, before nations, peoples, and tongues. Chap. 10:11. And the drama will soon close with the lightnings, thunderings, voices, an earthquake, and great hail, which will constitute nature's last convulsions.

Chapter XII.

THE GOSPEL CHURCH.

Verse 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2; And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

An elucidation of this portion of the chapter will involve little more than a mere definition of the symbols introduced. This may be given in few words as follows:—

"A woman:" the true church. "The sun:" the light and glory of the gospel dispensation. "The moon:" the Mosaic dispensation. As the moon shines with a borrowed light derived from the sun, so the former dispensation shone with a light borrowed from the present. There we had the type and shadow; here we have the antitype and substance. "A crown of twelve stars:" the twelve apostles. "A great red dragon:" Pagan Rome. "Heaven:" the space in which this representation was seen by the apostle. We do not understand that the events here represented to John took place

in Heaven where God resides; for they are events which transpired on earth; but this scenic representation which passed before the eye of the prophet appeared as if in the region occupied by the sun, moon, and stars, which we speak of as heaven.

Verses 1 and 2 cover a period of time commencing just previous to the opening of the present dispensation when the church was earnestly longing for and expecting the advent of the Messiah, and extending to the time of the full establishment of the gospel church with its crown of twelve apostles.

No symbols more fitting and impressive could be found than are here employed. The Mosaic dispensation shone with a light borrowed from the Christian dispensation, just as the moon shines with light borrowed from the sun. How appropriate, therefore, to represent the former by the moon, and the latter by the sun. The woman, the church, had the moon under her feet; that is, the Mosaic dispensation had just ended, and the woman was clothed with the light of the gospel sun which had just risen. By the figure of prolepsis the church is represented as fully organized, with its twelve apostles, before the man-child, Christ, appeared upon the scene. This is easily accounted for by the fact that it was to be immediately thus constituted when Christ should commence his ministry, and he is more especially connected with this church than with that of the former dispensation. There is no ground for any misunderstanding of the passage;

and hence no violence is done to a correct system of interpretation by this representation.

VERSE 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

The dragon drew the third part of the stars from heaven. If the twelve stars with which the woman is crowned denote the twelve apostles, then the stars thrown down by the dragon before his attempt to destroy the man child, or before the Christian era, may denote a portion of the rulers of the Jewish people. That the sun, moon and stars, are sometimes used in this symbolical sense, we have already had evidence in chapter 8:12. The dragon being a symbol, could deal only with symbolic stars; and the chronology of the act here mentioned would confine it to the Jewish people. Judea became a Roman province before the birth of the Messiah. The Jews had three classes of rulers: Kings, priests, and the Sanhedrim. A third of these, the kings, were taken away by the Roman power. Philip Smith, History of the World, vol. iii, p. 181, after describing the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and Herod, and its capitulation in the spring of B. C. 37, after

an obstinate resistance of six months, says: "Such was the end of the Asmonæan dynasty, exactly 130 years after the first victories of Judas Maccabæus, and in the seventieth year from the assumption of the diadem by Aristobulus I.

The dragon stood before the woman to devour her child. Rome in the person of Herod attempted to destroy Jesus Christ, when he sent forth and destroyed all the children of Bethlehem from two years old and under. The child which was born to the expectant desires of a waiting and watching church, was our adorable Redeemer, who is soon to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Herod could not destroy him. The combined powers of earth and hell could not overcome him; and though held for a time under the dominion of the grave, he rent its cruel bands, opened a way of life for the race, and was caught up to God and his throne, or ascended up to Heaven in the sight of his disciples, leaving to them by the words of the angels, this sweetest of all his promises, that like as he was taken away from them, so he would come again.

And the church fled into the wilderness, at the time the papacy was established, in 538, where it was nourished by the word of God and the ministration of angels, during the long dark and bloody rule, of that power 1260 years.

VERSE 7. And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8, And prevailed not; neither was their place any more found in heaven. 9. And the great dragon

was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12. Therefore rejoice, ye Heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The first six verses of this chapter, as has been seen, take us down to the close of the 1260 years, which marked the end of the papal supremacy in 1798. In the 7th verse it is equally plain that we are carried back into previous ages. How far? To the time first introduced in the chapter—the days of the first advent. "And there was war in heaven;" the same heaven where the woman and the dragon were seen at first; but they were actors in scenes that took place here upon the earth; hence we understand this war to be located in the same place. And to what time are we carried back? Evidently to the commencement of Christ's ministry here upon earth. That Michael is Christ, see Jude 9; 1 Thess. 4: 16; John 5: 28, 29; and that this was a special time of warfare between him and Satan, need not be argued. That the dragon here means Satan is plainly stated. The symbol is applied to Pagan Rome in verse 3, because that power was Satan's prime agent in the events there intro-

duced. Satan had looked forward to Christ's mission to earth as his last chance of success to overthrow the plan of salvation. He came to him with specious temptations, in hope of overcoming him; he tried in various ways to destroy him during his ministry; and when he had succeeded in laying him in the tomb, he endeavored in malignant triumph to hold him there; but in every encounter, the Son of God came off triumphant. And he sends back this gracious promise to his faithful followers: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as *I also overcame*, and am set down with my Father in his throne." This shows us that Jesus while on earth waged a warfare, and obtained the victory. Satan saw his last effort fail, his last scheme miscarry. He had boasted that he would overcome the Son of God in his mission to earth, and thus render the plan of salvation an ignominious failure; and well he knew if he was foiled in this his last desperate effort to thwart the work of God, his last hope was perished, and all was lost. See Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, p. 67.

But, in the language of verse 8, he "prevailed not;" and hence the song may well be sung, "Therefore rejoice, ye Heavens, and ye that dwell in them."

It is held by some that this war took place when Satan, then an angel of light and glory, rebelled in Heaven; and that the "casting out" of which John speaks, was his expulsion from Heaven at that time. But we are unable to harmonize this view with the

testimony before us. Thus, in verse 13, we read: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child." This shows that just as soon as the devil saw that he was cast out, he turned his wrath against the woman, the church, which, not far from that time, fled into the wilderness. When Satan, therefore, found himself thus overthrown, the man-child had already been brought forth; or, in other words, the first advent of Christ had taken place. Hence this war and defeat of Satan, taking place this side of the Christian era, and not a great length of time before the church went into the wilderness in 538, cannot be his primeval fall from Heaven before the creation of the world.

Again, there seem to be a number of instances in which Satan is spoken of as defeated or cast down. One was his first rejection from Heaven; another when Christ overcame him at his first advent; and there will be another in the future when he is cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up for a thousand years. And on each successive occasion, we behold a regularly increasing limitation of his power. He falls a degree lower in every succeeding combat. The first time, as we may plainly infer from certain scriptures, the contest was between him and God the Father. See Jude. The second time between him and Christ the Son, as in the scripture before us. While the third time an angel suffices to accomplish the work of his humiliation. Rev. 20: 1, 2. Since his first contest, he has not

been permitted to rise to the dignity of contending with the Father. Since the second, he has not had the privilege, if such it may be called, of a personal encounter with the Son. The war mentioned in the scripture now before us, is between the devil and Michael, Christ. The great effort of the former against the latter personally was during his mission here on earth; and Christ's great victory over him personally, was in that very contest.

"Neither was their place found any more in heaven." Heaven, we have seen, does not mean, in this chapter, the place which is the abode of God and his celestial messengers. We think it here denotes a condition rather than a place, and understand the expression to signify that they were here humiliated, and never to regain their former position. They had suffered a terrible defeat, which Christ describes by saying: "I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven." His hope which he had all along cherished of overcoming the Son of man when he took upon him our nature, had forever perished. His power was limited. He could no more aspire to a personal encounter with the Son of God, a power which hitherto had given, in a comparative degree, dignity and prestige to his position. Henceforth the church (the woman) is the object of his malice, and he resorts to all those nefarious means against her that would naturally characterize a baffled and hopeless rage. See Spiritual Gifts, vol. 1, p. 79.

But hereupon a song is sung in Heaven, "Now

is come salvation," etc. How is this, if these scenes are in the past? Had salvation and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ then come? We understand this song to be sung prospectively. These things were made sure. The great victory had been won by Christ which put the question of their establishment forever at rest. Just as we read in other scriptures, "We *have* eternal life," "We *have* redemption through his blood," etc., as though we were now in actual possession of these blessings; whereas we only have them by faith; and the language is simply an assurance that they are forever sure to the final overcomers.

The prophet then glances rapidly over the working of Satan from that time to the end, verses 11, 12, during which time the faithful "brethren" overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, while his wrath increases as his time grows short.

VERSE 13. **And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

But little comment is necessary on the verses last introduced. Suffice it to say that here we are again carried back to the time when Satan became fully aware that he had utterly failed in all his attempts against the Lord of glory in his earthly mission; and seeing this he turned with tenfold fury, as already noticed, upon the church which Christ had established. Then we have again brought to view the church in her wilderness state, a time, times and a half, 1260 years, verse 6, the flood of persecution which the devil cast out after the church through the medium of the papacy, the help the church received from the Reformation, which being espoused by various princes and earthly powers, restrained the spirit and work of persecution, and finally the last assault of the dragon upon the commandment keeping remnant, just in the future. It may be proper to notice that in this chapter three powers are made use of by the devil to carry out his work, and hence are all spoken of as the dragon, he being the inspiring agent in them all. 1. Pagan Rome. 2. Papal Rome. 3. The two-horned beast, our own country under the control of apostate Protestantism, which is the chief agent, as will hereafter appear, in making war upon those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.

PAGAN ROME.

PAPAL ROME.

PROTESTANT AMERICA.

THE LAST MESSAGE.

PLATE II. SYMBOLS OF REV. XII–XIV.

Chapter XIII.

PERSECUTING POWERS, PROFESSEDLY CHRISTIAN.

VERSE 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. 4. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven. 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. 9. If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The sea is a symbol of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Rev. 17:15. A wild beast is the Bible symbol of an unrighteous nation or power, representing sometimes the civil power alone; sometimes the ecclesiastical in connection with the civil. Whenever a beast is seen to come up out of the sea, it denotes that the power arose in a thickly populated territory; and if the winds are represented as blowing upon the sea, as in Dan. 7:2, 3, political commotion, civil strife and revolution are indicated.

By the dragon of the previous chapter, and the beast first introduced in this, we have the Roman power as a whole brought to view in its two phases of paganism and papacy; hence these two symbols have each the seven heads and ten horns. See on chapter 17:10.

The seven-headed and ten-horned beast, or, more briefly, the leopard beast, here introduced, symbolizes a power which exercises ecclesiastical as well as civil authority. This point is of sufficient importance to justify the introduction of a few of the conclusive arguments which go to prove it.

The line of prophecy in which this symbol occurs commences with chapter 12. The symbols of earthly governments embraced in the prophecy are, the dragon of chapter 12, and the leopard beast and two-horned beast of chapter 13. The same line of prophecy evidently continues into chapter 14, closing with verse 5 of that chapter. Commencing, therefore, with verse 1 of chapter 12, and ending

with verse 5 of chapter 14, we have a line of prophecy distinct and complete in itself.

Each of the powers here introduced is represented as fiercely persecuting the church of God. The scene opens with the church, under the symbol of a woman, anxiously longing for the promise to be fulfilled when the seed of the woman, the Lord of glory, should appear among men. The dragon stood before the woman for the purpose of devouring her child. His evil design is thwarted, and the child is caught up to God and his throne. A period follows in which the church suffers severe oppression from this dragon power. And though in this part of the scene the prophet occasionally glances forward, once even down almost to the end, because all the enemies of the church were actuated by the spirit of the dragon, yet in verse 1 of chapter 13, we are carried back to the time when the leopard beast, the successor of the dragon, commences his career. From this power, for the long period of 1260 years, the church suffers war and persecution. Following this period of oppression, the church has another conflict, brief, but sharp and severe, with the two-horned beast. Then comes deliverance; and the prophecy closes with the church brought safely through all her persecutions, and standing victorious with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Thank God for the sure promise of final victory.

The one character which ever appears the same in all these scenes, and whose history is the leading theme through all the prophecy, is the church of

God. The other characters are her persecutors, and are introduced simply because they are such. And here, as an introductory inquiry, we raise the question, Who, or what, is it that persecutes the true church? It is the false or apostate church. What is it that is ever warring against true religion? It is the false and counterfeit religion. Who ever heard of the civil power, merely, of any nation, persecuting the people of God? Governments may war against other governments, to avenge some wrong real or imaginary, or to acquire territory and extend their power, as nations have often warred against the Jews; but governments do not persecute (mark the word—do not persecute) people on account of their religion, unless under the control of some opposite and hostile system of religion. But the powers introduced in this prophecy, the dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast, are all *persecuting* powers. They are actuated by rage and enmity against the people and church of God. And this fact is of itself sufficiently-conclusive evidence that in each of these powers the ecclesiastical or religious element is the controlling power.

Take the dragon: What does it symbolize? The Roman Empire is the undisputed answer. But this is not enough. No one would be satisfied with such an answer as this. It must be more definite. We then add, the Roman Empire in its *pagan form;* to which all parties also agree. But just as soon as we say, Pagan, we introduce a religious element; for paganism is one of the hugest systems of coun-

terfeit religion that Satan ever devised. The dragon, then, is so far an ecclesiastical power that the very characteristic by which it is distinguished is a false system of religion. And what made the dragon persecute the church of Christ? It was because Christianity was swallowing up paganism, sweeping away its superstitions, overturning its idols, and dismantling its temples. The *religious* element of that power was touched; and persecution was the result.

We now come to the leopard beast of chapter 13. What does that symbolize? The answer still is, The Roman Empire. But the dragon symbolized the Roman Empire, and why does not the same symbol represent it still? Ah! there has been a change in the *religious character* of the empire; and this beast symbolizes Rome in its professedly Christian form. And it is this *change of religion*, and this alone, which made a change in the symbol necessary. This beast differs from the dragon only in that he presents a different *religious* aspect. Hence, it would be altogether wrong to affirm that it denotes simply the Roman civil power.

To this beast the dragon gives his seat, his power, and great authority. By what power was Rome Pagan succeeded? We all know that it was by Rome Papal. It matters not to our present purpose, when, nor by what means, this change was effected; the great fact is apparent, and is acknowledged by all, that the next great phase of the Roman empire after its pagan form, was its papal. It

would not be correct, therefore, to say that Pagan Rome gave its seat and power to a form of government merely civil, having no religious element whatever. No stretch of the imagination can conceive of such a transaction. But two phases of empire are here recognized; and in the prophecy, Rome is pagan until Rome is papal.

But it may be said that it takes the leopard beast and two-horned beast together to constitute the papacy, and hence it is to these that the dragon gives his power, seat, and great authority. But the prophecy does not say so. It is the leopard beast *alone* with which the dragon has to do. It is to that beast *alone* that he gives his power, seat, and great authority. It is that beast that has a head that is wounded to death, which is afterward healed; that beast that the whole world wonders after; that beast that receives a mouth speaking blasphemies, and that wears out the saints for 1260 years; and all this before the succeeding power, the two-horned beast, comes upon the stage of action at all. The leopard beast alone, therefore, symbolizes the Roman empire in its papal form, the controlling influence being ecclesiastical.

To show this more fully, we have but to draw a parallel between the little horn of Dan. 7: 8, 20, 24, 25, and this power. There are six points of identity as follows:—

1. The little horn was a blasphemous power: "He shall speak great words against the Most High." Dan. 7: 25. The leopard beast of Rev. 13:

6, does the same: "He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God."

2. The little horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. Dan. 7: 21. This beast also, Rev. 13: 7, makes war with the saints, and overcomes them.

3. The little horn had a mouth speaking great things. Dan. 7: 8, 20. And of this beast we read, Rev. 13: 5: "And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies."

4. The little horn arose on the cessation of the pagan form of the Roman empire. This beast arises at the same time; for the dragon, Pagan Rome, gives him his power, his seat, and great authority.

5. Power was given to the little horn to continue for a time, times, and the dividing of time, or 1260 years. Dan. 7: 25. To this beast also power was given for forty-two months, or 1260 years. Rev. 13: 5.

6. At the end of that specified period, the dominion of the little horn was to be taken away, Dan. 7: 26. At the end of the same period the leopard beast was himself to be "led into captivity." Rev. 13: 10. Both these specifications were fulfilled in the captivity and exile of the pope, and the temporary overthrow of the papacy by France in 1798.

Here are points that prove identity. For when we have in prophecy two symbols, as in this instance, representing powers that come upon the stage of action at the *same time*, occupy the *same*

territory, maintain the *same character*, do the *same work*, exist the *same length of time*, and meet the *same fate*, those symbols represent the *same identical power*.

Now all the particulars above specified do apply alike to the little horn and the leopard beast of Rev. 13, showing that those two symbols represent the same power. It is admitted on all hands that the little horn represents the papacy; and he who claims that the leopard beast of Rev. 13, does not represent the same to be consistent, must show, that at the same time that the papacy arose, there arose another great power exactly like it, occupying the same territory, bearing the same character, doing the same work, continuing the same length of time, and meeting the same fate, which would be as absurd as it would be impossible.

The head that was wounded to death was the papal head. We are held to this conclusion by the very obvious principle, that whatever is spoken in prophecy of the symbol of any government, applies to that government only while it is represented by that symbol. Now Rome is represented by two symbols, the dragon and the leopard beast, because it has presented two phases, the pagan and the papal; and whatever is said of the dragon, belongs to Rome only in its pagan form; and whatever is said of the leopard beast, belongs to Rome only in its professedly Christian form. But Rome was pagan in John's day, who lived under the sixth or imperial head. This shows us at once that six of the

heads, including the imperial, belong to the dragon; and if it was any one of these heads which was wounded to death, then it was one of the heads of the dragon, or one of the forms of government that belonged to Rome in its pagan form, and not one of the heads of the beast; and John should have said, I saw one of the heads of the dragon wounded to death. But he says that it was one of the heads of the beast that was wounded to death. In other words, this wound fell upon some form of government that existed in the Roman empire, after its change from paganism to Christianity. But after this change, there was but one head, and that was the papal. The exarchate of Ravenna continued only "a short space," Rev. 17: 10, and hence it is not usually reckoned among the heads. Thus it is placed beyond controversy that it was none other than the papal head that was wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed. This wound is the same as the going into captivity of Rev. 13: 10. It was inflicted when the pope was taken prisoner by Berthier the French general, and the papal government was for a time abolished, in 1798. Stripped of his power, both civil and ecclesiastical, the captive pope, Pius VI., died in exile, August 29, 1799. But the deadly wound was healed when the papacy was re-established, though with a diminution of its former power by the election of a new pope, March 14, 1800. See Bower's History of the Popes, pp. 404–428; Croly on the Apocalypse, London edition, p. 251.

This beast opens his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name. What can be more blasphemous than for a mortal man to assume the titles which the pope assumes? He calls himself, Lord God, the pope; King of kings, and Lord of lords; King of the world; Holy Father; Vicegerent of the Son of God; the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and by other titles which belong to Christ alone. And besides, the pope has, in our own day, backed by the deliberate action of the Ecumenical Council of 1870, assumed the divine prerogative of infallibility!

He blasphemes his tabernacle by turning the attention of his subjects to his own throne and palace instead of to the tabernacle of God in Heaven; by turning their attention away from the city of God, Jerusalem above, and pointing them to Rome, as the eternal city. And he blasphemes them that dwell in Heaven, by assuming to exercise the power of forgiving sins, and so turning away the minds of men from the mediatorial work of Christ and his heavenly assistants in the sanctuary above.

By verse 10 we are again referred to the events of 1798, when that power that had for 1260 years led the saints of God into captivity, was led into captivity itself, as already noticed.

VERSE 11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on

the earth in the sight of men, 14, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; 17; And that no man might buy or sell; save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

These verses bring to view the third great symbol in the line of prophecy we are examining, usually denominated the two-horned beast. We inquire for its application. The dragon, Rome pagan, and the leopard beast, Rome papal, present before us great nationalities standing as the representatives of two great systems of false religion. Analogy would seem to require that the remaining symbol, the two-horned beast, have a similar application. We therefore look for its fulfillment to some nation presenting another religious phase; and we consider the two-horned beast a symbol of these United States, not only because no other power answers to the prophecy, but because the specifications are accurately met in this.

1. The two-horned beast must symbolize a separate and distinct power; for it is *another* beast. This is too evident to call for proof. The two-horned beast acts in the sight of the first beast, and in reference to him; not in connection with

him. This is perfectly answered in the United States.

2. Being a separate and distinct power, it must occupy different territory. Two governments cannot occupy the same territory at the same time. This is further proved by what the two-horned beast does. He causes the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast. Now, the first beast, *whatever* power may be meant by it, is certainly competent to enforce its own worship, in its own country, and from its own subjects; and the fact that the two-horned beast has to put forth his authority to cause those under his dominion to worship the first beast, is proof positive that it occupies territory, and rules over a class of subjects, over which the first beast has no jurisdiction. Then we must look for this power to some nation outside the territory occupied by the governments of Europe; for that territory is all taken up by the first beast and the ten horns. This specification is admirably met in our own government, which has arisen outside of the territory of the ten kingdoms, and in less than a hundred years since the time when the prophecy began to be applicable to it, has sprung from a dependent colony to equal rank with the highest in the catalogue of nations.

3. The two-horned beast arises subsequently to the ten-horned beast; for that is called the *first* beast —first, because it had priority of existence. That beast we have proved to be the papacy. Now we ask, What power of any note has arisen outside the

ten kingdoms of Europe, since the establishment of the papacy, except our own government? None.

4. But the two-horned beast not only rises subsequently to the ten-horned beast, but a definite time is pointed out at which he begins to attract the attention of the world as a rising power; and this is when the first beast goes into captivity. Verse 10. At that time, says John (for there is no change in the scene), I beheld another beast "coming up." The going into captivity of the first beast, verse 10, was, as we have shown, the temporary overthrow of the papacy by the French, in 1798, being the same as the wounding of one of the heads to death, mentioned in verse 3. And it is subsequent to the healing of that wounded head, that the two-horned beast causes his subjects to worship that beast; for he causes them to worship the beast "whose deadly wound was healed." The work of the two-horned beast is thus brought down this side of the year 1798. And we here ask, What notable power was there on the face of the earth, "coming up," and attracting the attention of the world, in the year 1798, except our own government? Not one. No power can be found in which these three last specifications find a fulfillment except these United States.

5. The manner of its rise. The two-horned beast comes up out of the earth, unlike most of the others, which are said to come up out of the sea; that is, arose by overturning the powers that preceded them, by means of general war, and built them-

selves up by conquest. But this arose in a quiet, peaceful manner, instead of through strife and commotion. It does not arise by strife of the winds upon the sea, that is, by the overthrow of other nations and empires, but it arises where no other beast exists, and acts its part in the presence of its predecessors. This shows that it must arise from a new and previously unoccupied territory. This is true of our government, but not of any other to which we can look for a fulfillment of the two-horned beast prophecy. Against the declared peaceful rise of this power, the war of the Revolution is no objection; as that was a war in which this nation simply stood on the defensive in support of its Declaration of Independence. As remarked by another writer on this subject, "It is worthy of notice that the ten kingdoms of the fourth empire were all complete long before the discovery of America. And the war of the Revolution was not for the purpose of overthrowing one of the ten kingdoms of the fourth empire; but it was to maintain the just rights of the American people."

6. Its character. It had two horns like a lamb. What was it that was like a lamb? Not the beast, but the horns. And why did not the prophecy say simply that he had two horns, and nothing further? Why two horns *like a lamb?* It can be for no other purpose than to represent the *character* of this power. And the fact that there are two of these horns, signifies that there are two leading characteristics belonging to the power in question,

which are mild, harmless, and lamb-like. And how admirably this is met in our own government. The leading principles of this government are Republicanism and Protestantism. What principles can be more mild and lamb-like in appearance? And on these this government is founded; and these are the secret springs of its greatness and power. It was the object of those who first sought these shores, to found, as expressed by the Hon. J. A. Bingham, "a church without a pope, and a State without a king;" a government where all men should be considered free and equal, and all have the privilege of worshiping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. And under the benign influence of one of these principles, the declaration of equality and liberty, the eyes of the world are turned to the open arms of this nation, and emigration flows from all lands to our thus-far inviting and hospitable shores. And under the mild operation of the other, freedom of conscience for all, the gospel has been proclaimed and churches have multiplied. That a horn is sometimes taken to represent ecclesiastical as well as civil power, see the works entitled "The Three Messages" and "The United States in Prophecy," published at the REVIEW Office, Battle Creek, Mich.

7. Another point may not be overlooked. The two horns have no crowns upon them, which shows that the character of the government is not monarchical; and the language of verse 14 shows that it must be republican; for an appeal is made to the people in the enactment of its laws. It is some

government in which the law-making power resides in the people. And we may look where we will, outside of these United States, and we find no power of sufficient importance to be noticed in prophecy, in which this specification is met.

Here are seven specifications, all perfectly fulfilled in this government, and six of them applicable to no other government in the wide world. Now, if our nation is not the one which is represented by that symbol, then the fulfillment of that part of the prophecy is not even commenced; and we have yet to wait, not merely for certain acts to be done on the part of this government, which it is able at any time to do, and which, according to our view of the prophecy, are the only things for which we have to wait; but we have to wait for the development and growth of the power itself, and then for the performance of its acts. And this, if the power should rise as rapidly as our own nation has arisen, would consume, at least, a century. And more than this, if this nation is not the one meant by the two-horned beast, the prophecy has utterly failed; for 82 years have gone by since the time at which it should have been seen coming up; which was, as we have shown, the time when the first beast went into captivity in 1798.

The acts ascribed to this power are mostly future. He exerciseth all the power of the first beast, before him, that is, in his presence, as the original word signifies; showing that these two powers, the Papal

and Protestant, are contemporary. This power is set forth as a wonder-working power. The rise of spiritualism in our own country serves still further to identify this as the power in question. The wonders attending this movement are to a great extent already seen. But we understand they are to be more fully wrought for the express purpose of deceiving the people preparatory to the erection of the image. The image is to be an image to the papal beast. That was a church clothed with civil power. An image to it would be something resembling it. Must we not understand, therefore, that the image will be the church of this country, or rather, since religious sects are here so numerous, an ecclesiastical organization representing these churches, clothed with power to punish heretics, and enforce its dogmas under the severest penalties of the law? And let us notice how the way is prepared and preparing for this last great act of the two-horned beast. Under the mild influence of one of the lamb-like horns, the Protestant principle that all have liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, which the government has thus far guaranteed to all its subjects, churches have multiplied in the land. But these churches have, as bodies, rejected light and truth, and have met with a moral fall. A catalogue of twenty immoral features, which seem to overbalance or nullify all the good ones, is the photograph which Paul gives in 2 Tim. 3: 1–5, of the popular churches of the last days. But the people of God are still mainly to be

found in connection with these churches, and are yet to be called out. Rev. 18: 4. And when the good shall have all left these religious bodies, and the saving influence of such shall have been wholly withdrawn from their communion, then they will be ready for any desperate and oppressive movement that Satan can induce those to enter upon who are led captive by him at his will. Now, out of this material, let an ecclesiastical organization be formed, and let the government grant it power (and it will not have it till the government does grant it) to enforce its dogmas under the pains and penalties of the civil law; and what do we have? An exact image to the first beast, a church clothed with power to enforce its doctrines upon dissenters with fire and sword. Here would be an organization, separate from the government, constituting no part of it, yet created by it, and forming a most perfect counterpart to the prophecy concerning the creation of an image to the beast. To be sure, this persecution for opinion's sake is contrary to the principle now maintained by the government, as represented by one of the horns, that every man shall have liberty to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience; but this answers well to the symbol; for the dragon voice is directly the opposite of the disposition represented by the lamb-like horns.

When this image is instated in power, its first act is to cause, or decree, that all who will not yield allegiance to it, shall be put to death. That it suc-

ceeds in this purpose we have no proof. On the other hand, it plainly appears that it does not. But is it not said that he shall *cause* that as many as will not worship the image of the beast shall be killed? Yes, we reply, and so, likewise, he *causes* all to receive a mark. But do all actually receive it? Do the saints of God receive the mark of the beast? No, they get the victory over the beast; and Rev. 20: 4, plainly states that they do *not* receive the mark of the beast. Yet he causes *all* to receive the mark. Now if he can "cause" all to receive the mark, and yet all not actually receive it, in like manner he can cause that as many as will not worship the image of the beast, shall be killed, and yet they not actually be put to death. This is one of the instances so common in the Bible, where a verb of action is used to signify merely the *will* and *endeavor* to do the action in question. In this case the word "cause" would signify merely to decree or enact. See Bush on Ex. 7: 11, and Note at the end of this chapter. Deliverance is at this time promised to the people of God. Dan. 12: 1.

Since the foregoing positions were taken, spiritualism has astonished the world with its terrible progress, and shown itself to be the wonder-working element which the prophecy so plainly attributes to the two-horned beast. This has amazingly strengthened the force of the application. And now within a few years we have seen the beginning of a remarkable movement, looking toward the fulfillment of what would generally be con-

sidered the more improbable portions of our application of the prophecy; namely, the formation of the image, and the enforcement of the mark.

There is visible in the theological world a general and growing movement for union, not the breaking down of sectarian barriers and uniting on one common foundation of truth, but a union of denominations for the sake of greater strength and influence, on such points of faith as they hold in common.

And still later, an Association, the National Reform Association, even now national in character, as well as in name, has been formed for the purpose of securing a religious amendment to the Constitution of the United States, so as to put "all Christian laws, usages and institutions, on an undeniable legal basis, in the fundamental law of the land." And among these the so-called Christian Sabbath is made prominent with emphasis.

This Association has already held national and local conventions in the principal cities of the Union. Among its officers are to be found Governors of States, State Superintendents of Public Instruction, Bishops, Judges of higher Courts, and College Presidents and Professors. It is a movement of great mental, social, and professional strength; and its friends are jubilant in anticipation of speedy and complete success.

To receive the mark of the beast in the forehead, is, we understand, to give the assent of the mind and judgment to his authority, in the adoption of

that institution which constitutes the mark; to receive it in the hand is to signify allegiance by some outward act. The mark is the mark, not of the two-horned beast, nor of the image of the beast, but of the papal beast. The name and the number of the name pertain to the same beast. From the 11th verse to the end of the chapter, the expression "the beast" in every instance refers to the papal beast: the two-horned beast is designated by the pronoun, he. The mark of the beast is understood to be a counterfeit Sabbath which is erected in opposition to the Sabbath of Jehovah, which we have shown on chapter 7: 1–3, to be the seal of the living God. For an exposition of the mark, see on chapter 14: 9–12.

For a full exposition of the symbol of the two-horned beast, the reader is referred to the work, "The United States in Prophecy," published at the REVIEW AND HERALD Office.

VERSE 18. **Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.**

The Number of his Name. The number of the beast, says the prophecy, "is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." (666.) This number, some attempt to find in the word "*Lateinos*," the "Latin" kingdom. Thus they make, by what rule we do not understand, L stand for 30; A, for 1; T, for 300; E, for 5; I, for 10; N, for 50; O, for 70; and S, for 200; which numbers, add-

ed together, make 666. Deriving the number from the name, in this manner, we must regard as rather conjectural than otherwise, seeing that names can be found to almost any extent, making just that number. We think we discover, however, a serious objection to the name here suggested. The number, says the prophecy, is the number of a man; and if it is to be derived from a name or title, the natural conclusion would be that it must be the name or title of some particular man. But in this we have the name of a people or kingdom, not of "a man" as the prophecy says.

The most plausible name we have ever seen suggested as containing the number of the beast, is the blasphemous title which the pope applies to himself, and wears in jeweled letters upon his miter or pontifical crown. That title is this: *Vicarius filii Dei:* "Vicegerent of the Son of God." Taking the letters out of this title which the Latins used as numerals, and giving them their numerical value, we have just 666. Thus we have V, 5; I, 1; C, 100; (a and r not used as numerals;) I, 1; U (formerly the same as V), 5; (s and f not used as numerals;) I, 1; L, 50; I, 1; I, 1; D, 500; (e not used as a numeral;) I, 1. Adding these numbers together, we have just 666.

The following extract on this point is from a work entitled "The Reformation," bearing the date of 1832:—

"Mrs. A., said Miss Emmons, I saw a very curious fact the other day; I have dwelt upon it much,

and will mention it. A person, lately, was witnessing a ceremony of the Romish church. As the Pope passed him in the procession, spendidly dressed in his pontifical robes, the gentleman's eye rested on these full, blazing letters in front of his miter 'VICARIUS FILII DEI,' The Vicar of the Son of God. His thoughts, with the rapidity of lightning, reverted to Rev. 13: 18. Will you turn to it? said Mrs. A. Alice opened the New Testament and read: 'Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.' She paused, and Miss Emmons said, He took out his pencil, and marking the numerical letters of the inscription on his tablet, it stood 666."

Here we have indeed the number of a man, even the "man of sin;" and it is a little singular, perhaps providential, that he should select a title which shows the blasphemous character of the beast, and then cause it to be inscribed upon his miter, as if to brand himself with the number 666.

Thus closes chapter 13, leaving the people of God with the powers of earth in deadly array against them, and the decrees of death and banishment from society out upon them, for their adherence to the truth. Spiritualism will be, at the time specified, performing its most imposing wonders, deceiving all the world except the elect, Matt. 24: 24; 2 Thess. 2: 8–12. This will be the "hour of temptation," or trial, which is to come upon all the world, as mentioned in Rev. 3: 10. What is the issue of

this conflict? This important inquiry is not left unanswered. The first five verses of the following chapter, which should have been numbered as a part of this, complete the chain of this prophecy, and reveal the glorious triumph of the champions of the truth.

NOTE.

"It is a canon of interpretation of frequent use in the exposition of the sacred writings that verbs of action sometimes signify merely the *will* and *endeavor* to do the action in question. Thus in Eze. 24:13: 'I have *purified* thee, and thou wast not purged;' *i. e.*, I have endeavored, used means, been at pains, to purify thee. John 5:44: 'How can ye believe which *receive* honor one of another;' *i. e.*, endeavor to receive. Rom. 2:4: 'The goodness of God *leadeth* thee to repentance;' *i. e.*, endeavors, or tends, to lead thee. Amos 9:3: 'Though they be *hid* from my sight in the bottom of the sea;' *i. e.*, though they aim to be hid. 1 Cor. 10:33: 'I *please* all men;' *i. e.*, endeavor to please. Gal. 5:4: 'Whosoever of you are *justified* by the law;' *i. e.*, seek and endeavor to be justified. Ps. 69:4: 'They that *destroy* me are mighty;' *i. e.*, that endeavor to destroy me. Eng., 'That *would* destroy me.' Acts 7:26: 'And *set them at one* again;' *i. e.*, wished and endeavored. Eng., '*Would* have set them.'"

Chapter XIV.

THE THREE MESSAGES.

VERSE 1. And I looked, and, lo, a lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. 3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.

It is a pleasing feature of the prophetic word that the people of God are never brought into positions of trial and difficulty and there left. Taking them down into scenes of danger, the voice of prophecy does not there cease, leaving them to guess their fate, in doubt, perhaps despair, as to the final result; but it takes them through to the end, and shows the issue in every conflict. The first five verses of Rev. 14, are an instance of this. The 13th chapter closed,

with the people of God, a small and apparently weak and defenseless company, in deadly conflict with the mightiest powers of earth which the dragon is able to muster to his service. A decree is passed, backed up by the supreme power of the land, that they shall worship the image, and receive the mark, under pain of death if they refuse to comply. What can the people of God do in such a conflict, and in such an extremity? What will become of them? Glance forward with the apostle to the very next scene in the programme, and what do we behold? The very same company standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb,—a victorious company, harping on symphonious harps, their triumph in the courts of Heaven. Thus are we assured that when the time of our conflict with the powers of darkness comes, deliverance is not only certain, but will immediately be given, being the next event in our history, the glorious rest after the weary pilgrimage, the glorious consummation of a life of toil, suffering, and ceaseless conflict here.

That the 144,000 here seen on Mount Zion, are the saints who were just before brought to view as objects of the wrath of the beast and his image, several considerations show:—

1. They are identical with those sealed in Rev. 7, who have already been shown to be the righteous who are alive at the second coming of Christ.

2. They are the overcomers in the sixth, or Philadelphian state of the church. See Rev. 3: 11, 12.

3. They are "redeemed from among men," verse

4, an expression which can be applicable only to those who are translated from among the living. Paul labored, if by any means he might attain to a resurrection out from among the dead. Phil. 3: 11. This is the hope of those who sleep in Jesus—a resurrection from the dead. A redemption from among men, from among the living, must mean a different thing, and can mean only one thing, and that is translation. Hence the 144,000 are the living saints who will be translated at the second coming of Christ.

Where is the Mount Zion where this company is seen standing? The Mount Zion above; for the voice of harpers, which no doubt is uttered by these very ones, is heard from Heaven; the same Zion from which the Lord utters his voice when he speaks to his people in close connection with the coming of the Son of man. Joel 3: 16; Heb. 12: 26–28; Rev. 16: 17. A just consideration of the fact that there is a Mount Zion in Heaven, and a Jerusalem above, would be a powerful antidote against the hallucination of the doctrine called "The Age to Come."

A few more particulars only respecting the 144,000, will claim notice in these brief thoughts.

1. They have the name of the Lamb's Father in their foreheads. In chapter 7, they are said to have the seal of God in their foreheads. An important key to an understanding of the seal of God is thus furnished us; for we at once perceive that the Father regards his name as his seal. That com-

mandment of the law which contains God's name is therefore the seal of the law. The Sabbath commandment is the only one which has this; that is, that contains the descriptive title which distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Wherever this was placed, there the Father's name was said to be; Deut. 16: 6; and whoever keeps this commandment has, consequently, the seal of the living God.

2. They sing a new song which no other company is able to learn. In chapter 15: 3, it is called the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses, as may be seen by reference to Ex. 15, was the song of his experience and deliverance. Such therefore is the song of the 144,000. No others can join in it; for no other company will have had an experience like theirs.

3. They were not defiled with women. A woman is in Scripture the symbol of a church; a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a corrupt woman an apostate church. It is then a characteristic of this company that at the time of their deliverance they are not defiled with, or have no connection with, the fallen churches of the land. Yet we are not to understand that they never had any connection with these churches; for it is only at a certain time that people become defiled by them. In chapter 18: 4, we find a call issued to the people of God while they are in Babylon, to come out, *lest* they become partakers of her sins. Heeding that call, and leaving her connection, they escape the

defilement of her sins. So of the 144,000. Though some of them may have once had a connection with corrupt churches, they sever that connection, when it would have become sin to retain it longer.

4. They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. We understand that this is spoken of them in their redeemed state. They are the special companions of their glorified Lord in the kingdom. Chap. 7: 17, speaking of the same company, and at the same time, says: "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and *shall lead* them unto living fountains of waters."

5. They are "first-fruits" unto God and the Lamb. This term appears to be applied to different ones to denote especial conditions. Christ is the first-fruits as the antitype of the wave-sheaf. The first receivers of the gospel are called by James 1: 18, a kind of first-fruits. So the 144,000 ripening up for the heavenly garner here on earth, during the troublous scenes of the last days, being translated to Heaven without seeing death, and occupying a pre-eminent position, are in this sense, we understand, called first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. With this description of the 144,000 triumphant, the line of prophecy commencing with chapter 12, closes.

VERSE 6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is

come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; 11; And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12. Here is the patience of the saint; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The First Message. Another scene, and another chain of prophetic events, is introduced in these verses. In this and the two following messages, we have what is known as the three angels' messages of Rev. 14. The first angel is called another angel in verse 6, because John had already seen one flying through heaven in a similar manner. Chap. 8: 13. He proclaims the gospel, not a new one, but the everlasting gospel, called in Matt. 24: 14, "the gospel of the kingdom." But while it is the same gospel, there are particular features which constitute the burden of this message, chief among which, as shown in verse 7, is the *nearness* of the kingdom. Says an eminent writer on the prophecies, "The burden of this angel was to be the *same* gospel which had been before proclaimed, but con-

nected with it was the additional motive of the *proximity* of the kingdom. No mere preaching of the gospel without announcing its *proximity* could fulfill this message." This message therefore cannot symbolize the preaching of the gospel by the apostles; for they only reasoned of a judgment to come, indefinitely future. Moreover they cautioned every one against entertaining the idea that the day of Christ was at hand, till after the great papal apostasy, and the predicted career of the Man of Sin, who was, according to other prophecies, to rule for 1260 years, or to 1798. And we may add that the prophecies, upon which this proclamation is based, were closed up and sealed to the same time, 1798. This message cannot be given by any class of people except those who live when the end is just at hand. The Advent proclamation, especially from 1840 to 1844, completely answers to the prophecy, and is the only great religious movement which can be pointed to as its fulfillment. The judgment announced is shown by arguments which the designed brevity of this work will not here admit, to be the Investigative Judgment, which the reader will perceive must take place before the coming of Christ; for when Christ comes it is already decided who of the dead shall be raised, and who of the living are worthy to be changed. That investigative work we believe commenced in the sanctuary above, when this message ceased as a leading proclamation, at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. On this and the following messages we

are the more brief here, as they are set forth in a separate work published at the REVIEW Office, Battle Creek, Michigan.

The Second Message. The second angel announces the fall of Babylon. What is Babylon? The figure is taken from the ancient city of Babylon; and that received its name from the confusion of tongues which there took place; hence we understand that by this symbol is meant all forms of false and apostate religion,

"Whose creeds are various as her costly towers."

In other scriptures also this spiritual Babylon is set forth under the symbol of a great city, and in Rev. 16:19 it is presented in three divisions, which we understand to be Paganism, Catholicism, and backslidden Protestantism. The verse before us applies evidently to that division in which the burden of the proclamation of the three messages is found, which is the last-named. It must apply also to that division in which it was possible for a still greater moral declension to take place; which again was the last-named; for Paganism had always been a false religion, and Catholicism always a corrupt one. Rev. 18:12, shows the fall of Babylon to be a moral fall, a giving away to ungodliness and spiritual darkness and deception, which finally calls down from heaven upon the constituent parts of this great city literal judgments of the severest kind. The fall is caused by a rejection of the great truth of the soon-coming of Christ sent forth from Heaven in such majesty and power.

By the wine of wrath (not anger, but intense passion or desire) of her fornication we understand her false doctrines and pernicious errors. Of these she has caused all nations to drink. A message of truth was sent, which, if received, would have healed her of her dissensions, uniting the professed followers of Christ upon the great truth of the soon-coming of the Son of man. But instead of receiving the truth, she clung to her errors, and by spreading them among the nations has stood directly in the way of the advancement of the truth in the earth. Thus having grieved the Spirit of God, that Spirit has been withdrawn, and a moral fall is the result. The spirit and power of genuine Christianity has departed from the professed churches of our land. An abundance of statistics to prove this, may be seen in the work above referred to.

The Third Message. The third angel follows with a message of the most fearful import. From the language in which it is expressed, we understand at once that it is designed to warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, and prepare them for that time when the decree shall be issued enforcing such worship, as noticed in the previous chapter. This is the issue, then, to which the world is to be brought; namely, to refuse the mark of the beast and thus become exposed to the wrath of anti-Christian, earthly powers; or, to receive the mark of the beast, and brave the unmixed wrath of God.

The Mark of the Beast. It now becomes a matter of solemn moment to inquire what this mark of the

beast is, against which there is uttered so terrific a warning. No warning more terrible is found in all the Bible. The position against which it is uttered must therefore be a most heinous and Heaven-daring one. And is it possible that the world will never know what this sin is? This is not possible. God does not so deal with his creatures. He does not punish the wicked without their knowing, or having full opportunity to know, for what cause the punishment is inflicted. Hence we argue that this question is not an unfathomable mystery; but that all may know what constitutes the mark of the beast, and how they may avoid receiving it.

The message containing this warning is the last to be given before the revelation of the Lord from heaven; for the next event in this line of prophecy is the coming of one like the Son of man on the great white cloud. And since, as shown on chapters 6 and 7, we have reached the last days, and the coming of Christ is at the door, the time has come for the proclamation of this message; and hence we argue again that the time has come when it should be known what the mark of the beast is. Yet how few ever think on this point! and how much less still is the number of those who have a position which they can offer with any semblance of proof as the truth in the matter!

This subject is so fully discussed in publications issued at the REVIEW Office, that a mere outline is all that need here be presented. The subject of the seal of God is explained at length on Rev. 7, to

which the reader is referred, as the same reasoning will apply largely to the subject before us.

The beast whose mark men are here warned against receiving, is the one brought to view in Rev. 13: 1–10. This we have already shown to be the Papal Roman power, the same as the little horn of Dan. 7: 8. The beast of Rev. 13, was to claim worship from those who dwell upon the earth; the little horn of Dan. 7, was to claim the power to change times and laws; while the Man of Sin, another name for the same power, was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. If he exalts himself *above* God, he must claim that his laws shall be obeyed in preference to the laws of God. Mark it well; there is absolutely no other way in which he can exalt himself above God.

We are now prepared to inquire for proof that the Papal power has tampered with the law of God, or attempted a change in the ten commandments; and that if the ten commandments are understandingly kept as changed by that power, instead of as originally given by the great Jehovah, then the law-changing power is worshiped instead of the law-making power. Paul has said, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Rom. 6: 16.

It has already been shown that the little horn is identical with the beast against the worship of which the third angel's message warns us. In Dan.

7 : 25, it is said of this power, that "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." The laws here spoken of must be the laws of the Most High, even as the saints connected therewith are the saints of the Most High. Earthly powers have a right to change human laws; but the laws here spoken of are such as this power could only think to change, as a mark of its anti-Christian presumption, but not in reality be able to change. And this change pertains to the moral law of God; for it is a law with which the saints have to do during the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, which period is wholly in this dispensation. The ceremonial law is therefore out of the question.

Then we ask, Who has fulfilled this remarkable prophecy? Who has changed or attempted to change the law of God? To come more directly to the point, Who has changed the Sabbath? And let it be noticed, that it is nowhere in the Scriptures intimated that there would be any change made or attempted, in the law of God, except by this power; therefore whatever change has been made in God's moral code, it has been done by this power. Let those consider well this fact, who claim that the Sabbath was changed by the Lord Jesus or his apostles.

The great change in the law which the church of Rome claims to have made, and which it labors

hardest to impress upon the minds of its disciples, is the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. On this point it is unnecessary to quote from Protestant authors. Roman Catholics themselves admit it; and not only so, but they boast of it as an evidence of the right and power of their church to legislate in divine things. For evidence on these points, the reader is referred to "The Catholic Catechism of the Christian Religion," "Milner's 'End of Controversy,'" "Catholic Christian Instructed," "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine," and "Doctrinal Catechism,"—all Catholic works of standard authority. From the "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine" we give the following question and answer: "Question. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days? Answer. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church." And the "Doctrinal Catechism" says: "Question. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority."

Here, then, we have the mark of the beast,—a

sabbatic institution put in place of the original institution of Jehovah, and brought forward by the Romish church itself as the badge and token of its power to change the law of the Most High. And he who, with this plain fact before him, shall deliberately yield to the claims of this anti-Christian power, in opposition to the plain requirements of the Creator, will thereby acknowledge the supremacy of the laws of the beast, become a worshiper of the beast instead of the great Jehovah, and receive the mark of the beast instead of the seal of the living God.

It will thus be seen that a person does not have the mark of the beast in the Scripture sense, except by a voluntary obedience to the authority of the beast, with the issue fairly before him. The observance of the first day of the week, under the uncorrected supposition that it is a scriptural requirement, cannot constitute the mark of the beast. God takes into account the light a person has, and the motives from which he acts. He who was the light of the world once said to the Jews, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15 : 22. Hence Christians of past ages who have died in the observance of this institution, unaware of any connection between it and the enactments of the beast, and supposing, the while, that by observing Sunday they were rendering obedience to the requirements of God,—can they be said to have had the mark of the beast? By no means. The

honesty of purpose with which they lived up to the best light they had, will be a guarantee of their acceptance with God. Hence, again, it cannot be said of any at the present time, that they have the mark of the beast. But the true church must not come up to the hour of translation encumbered, however unwittingly, with Papal errors and institutions; and before we come upon the issue brought to view in chapter 13: 15–27, light must be given upon the mark of the beast, and an effectual warning be uttered against its reception. The third angel's message, now in full process of accomplishment before us, is therefore timely and important. It is a summons to the faithful to make speedy preparation for the coming issue.

For a full discussion of the subject of the Sabbath, and a history of its change to the first day of the week, showing the part the Papacy has acted therein, the reader is referred to "The History of the Sabbath," by Eld. J. N. Andrews, issued by the S. D. A. Publishing Association, Battle Creek, Mich.

The Punishment of Beast Worshipers. These shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. When is this torment inflicted? Some apply it at the end of the future one thousand years, Rev. 20: 2. But we do not think it is of necessity located there. Chapter 19: 20 shows that there is at the second coming of Christ, what may be called a lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast and false prophet are cast *alive.* This can refer only to the

destruction visited upon them at the commencement, not at the end, of the thousand years. Again, there is a remarkable passage in Isaiah to which we are obliged to refer in explanation of the phraseology of the threatening of the third angel, and which unquestionably describes scenes to take place here at the second advent, and in the desolate state of the earth during the thousand years following. That the language in the Revelation was borrowed from this prophecy can hardly fail to be seen. After describing the Lord's anger upon the nations, the great slaughter of their armies, the departing of the heavens as a scroll, etc., it says: "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever." Isa. 34: 8–10. And since there is to be a lake of fire at the end of the thousand years, we can only conclude that the destruction of the living wicked at the commencement, and the final doom of all the ungodly at the end, of this period, are very similar.

Duration of the Punishment. The terms forever and ever cannot here denote eternity. For where is this punishment inflicted? On this earth, or where there is succession of day and night. This is further shown from the passage in Isaiah already re-

ferred to, if that is, as we suppose, the language from which this is borrowed, and applies at the same time. That language is spoken of the land of Idumea. But whether we take this to mean literally the land of Edom, south and east of Judea, or to represent, as we think it does, this whole earth at the time when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion comes, in either case the scene must eventually terminate; for this earth is finally to be made new, cleansed of every stain of sin, every vestige of suffering and decay, and to become the habitation of righteousness and joy throughout eternal ages. The word, *αἰων*, here translated "forever," Schrevelius, in his Greek Lexicon, defines thus: "An age; a long period of time; indefinite duration; time, whether longer or shorter." For a discussion of the meaning of this term, see the work, "Man's Nature and Destiny."

The period of the third message is a time of patience with the people of God. Paul and James both give us instruction on this point. Heb. 10: 36; James 5: 7, 8. Meanwhile this waiting company are keeping the commandments of God, the ten commandments, and the faith of Jesus, all the teachings of Christ and his apostles as contained in the New Testament. The true Sabbath as contained in the commandments is thus brought out in vivid contrast with the counterfeit sabbath, the mark of the beast, which finally distinguishes those who reject the third message.

VERSE 13. And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. 14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Events grow solemn as we near the end. It is this fact which gives to the third angel's message, now going forth, its unusual degree of solemnity and importance. It is the last warning to go forth prior to the coming of the Son of man. We are fast passing over a line of prophecy which culminates in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his foes, and to reward his saints. Not only so, but we have come so near its accomplishment that the very next link in the chain is this crowning and momentous event. And time never rolls back. As the river does not flinch and fly as it approaches the precipice, but bears all floating bodies over with resistless power, and as the seasons never reverse their course, but summer follows in the path of the budding fig-tree, and winter treads close upon the falling leaf, so we are borne onward and onward, whether we will or not, whether prepared or not, to the unavoidable and irreversible crisis. Ah! how little dream the

proud professor or the careless sinner of the doom that is impending! And how hard for even those who know and profess the truth to realize it as it is!

John is commanded by a voice from Heaven to write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; and the response of the Spirit is, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." From henceforth must signify from some particular point of time. What point? Evidently from the commencement of the message in connection with which this is spoken. But why are they blessed? There must be some special reason for this. Is it not because they escape the time of fearful peril which the saints are to encounter near the close of their pilgrimage? And while they are blessed in this respect, in common with all the righteous dead, they have an advantage over them in being doubtless that company spoken of in Dan. 12: 1, who are raised to everlasting life at the standing up of Michael. Thus escaping the perils through which the rest of the 144,000 pass, they rise and share with them in their final triumph here, and occupy with them their pre-eminent place in the kingdom.* In this way we understand their works follow them: These works are held in re-

* We understand that all who die in this message help compose the 144,000, inasmuch as just that number is sealed in the sealing work of Rev. 7, which is but another prophecy of the third angel's message. Those who, having had an experience in this work, go down into the grave, are an exception to the general statement that they (the 144,000) come up through great tribulation. The

membrance, to be rewarded at the Judgment; and the persons receive the same recompense they would have had, had they lived and faithfully endured all the perils of the time of trouble.

It will be noticed that in this line of prophecy, three angels precede the Son of man on the white cloud, and three are introduced after that symbol. We understand that literal angels are engaged in the scenes here described. The first three have charge of the three special messages, and may also symbolize a body of religious teachers. The message of the fourth angel we understand to be uttered after the Son of man takes his seat upon the white cloud, having finished his priestly work, but before he appears in the clouds of heaven. As the language is addressed to Him who is seated upon the white cloud, having in his hand a sharp sickle ready to reap, it must denote a message of prayer on the part of the church, after their work is done, and probation has ceased, and nothing remains but for the Lord to appear and take his people to himself. It is doubtless the day-and-night cry, spoken of by our Lord in Luke 18 : 7, 8, in connection with the coming of the Son of man. And this prayer will be answered. The elect will be avenged. He that is seated upon the cloud will thrust in his sickle,

fact that they are raised from the dead does not conflict with the testimony of verse 4, that they are "redeemed from among men," that is from among the living; for they are raised only to mortal life, and receive immortality or redemption by translation just like those of the righteous who have never passed through the grave.

and the saints, under the figure of the wheat of the earth, will be gathered to the heavenly garner.

"And He that sat on the cloud," says the prophecy, "thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." By this language we are carried down past the second advent, with its accompanying scenes of destruction to the wicked, and salvation to the righteous. Beyond these scenes we must therefore look for the application of the following verses:—

VERSE 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The last two angels have to do with the wicked—the wicked, most fitly represented by the rich and bloated clusters of the vine of the earth. May it not be that the closing doom of that class, at the end of the thousand years, is here presented, the prophecy thus making a final disposition of both the righteous and the wicked; the righteous clothed with immortality, and safely established in the kingdom, the wicked perishing around the city at the time of its ultimate location upon the earth?

The angel comes out of the temple, where the records are kept, and the punishment is determined. The other angel has power over fire. This may have some connection with the fact that fire is to be the element by which the wicked are at last to be destroyed; although to carry out the figure, the wicked, having been likened to the clusters of the vine of the earth, are said to be cast into the great winepress, which is trodden without the city. And blood comes out of the winepress even to the horses' bridles. We know that the wicked are doomed to be swallowed up at last in a flood of all-devouring flame descending from God out of Heaven. But what preliminary slaughter may take place among the doomed host, we know not. It is not improbable that this language will be literally fulfilled.

As the first four angels of this series denoted a movement on the part of the people of God, the last two may denote the same; for the saints are to have some part to act, in meting out and executing the final punishment of the wicked, 1 Cor. 6 : 2; Ps. 149 : 9.

Thus closes this chain of prophecy—closes as others close, with the complete triumph of God and Christ over all their foes, and with the glorious salvation that awaits the faithful followers of the Prince of life, forever secured.

Chapter XV.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

VERSE 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. 5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven was opened; 6; And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. 8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Thus reads the fifteenth chapter entire. By it we are carried back to a new series of events.

The whole chapter is but an introduction to the most terrific judgments of the Almighty, that ever have been, or are to be, visited upon this earth in its present state; namely, the seven last plagues. The most that we here behold is a solemn preparation for the outpouring of these unmixed vials. Verse 5 shows that they transpire subsequently to the last ministration in the sanctuary; for the temple is opened before they are poured out. They are given in charge to seven angels, and these angels are clothed in linen pure and white, a fit emblem of the purity of God's righteousness and justice in the infliction of these judgments. They receive these vials from one of the four beasts. These beasts were decided (see Thoughts on chap. 4,) to be a class of Christ's assistants in his sanctuary work. How appropriate, then, that these should be the ones to deliver to the ministers of vengeance, vials to be poured upon those who have slighted Christ's mercy, abused his long-suffering, heaped contumely upon his name, and crucified him afresh in the treatment of his followers! While the seven angels are performing their fearful mission, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no man, οὐδείς, no one, no being, referring to Christ and his heavenly assistants, can enter therein. This shows that the work of mercy is closed, and there is no ministration in the sanctuary during the infliction of the plagues; hence they are manifestations of the wrath of God, without any mixture of mercy.

But in this scene the people of God are not forgotten. The prophet is permitted to anticipate a little in verses 2–4, and behold them as victors upon the sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, or sparkling and refulgent with the glory of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The sea of glass upon which these victors stand, is the same as that brought to view in chapter 4: 6, which was before the throne in Heaven. And as we have no evidence that it has yet changed its location, and the saints are seen upon it, we have here indubitable proof, in connection with chapter 14 : 1–5, that the saints are taken to Heaven to receive a portion of their reward. Thus, like the bright sun bursting through the midnight cloud, some scene is presented, or some promise given to the humble followers of the Lamb, in every hour of temptation, as if to assure and re-assure them of God's love and care for them, and of the certainty of their final reward. Verily the words of the prophet are among the true sayings of God: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him," but, "woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him." Isa. 3: 10, 11.

Chapter XVI.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES POURED OUT.

THIS chapter gives a description of the seven vials of the unmingled wrath of God, and the effects that follow as they are poured upon the earth. Concerning the character and chronology of these plagues, there is a difference of opinion among Bible readers. Our first inquiry, therefore, is, What is the true position on these points? Are they symbolical and mostly fulfilled in the past, as some contend? or are they literal and all future, as others no less confidently affirm? A brief examination of the testimony will, we think, settle conclusively these questions.

VERSE 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.

This description of the very first plague sets us on the track of their chronology; for it is poured out upon those who have the mark of the beast, and who worship his image,—the identical work against

which the third angel warns us. This is conclusive proof that these judgments are not poured out till after this angel closes his work, and that the very class who hear his warning and reject it, are the ones to receive the first drops from the overflowing vials of God's indignation. Now if these plagues are in the past, the image of the beast and his worship are in the past. If these are past, the two-horned beast, which makes this image, and his work, are in the past. If these are past, then the third angel's message, which warns us in reference to this work, is in the past; and if this is past, that is, ages in the past, where this view locates the commencement of the plagues, then the second and first messages, which precede that, are also ages in the past. Then the prophetic periods on which that message is based, especially the 2300 days, ended ages ago. And if this is so, the 70 weeks of Dan. 9 are thrown wholly into the Jewish dispensation, and the great proof of the Messiahship of Christ is destroyed. But it has been shown on chapters 7, 13, and 14, that the first and second messages have been given in our own day; that the third is now in process of accomplishment; that the two-horned beast has come upon the stage of action, and is preparing to act the part assigned him; and that the formation of the image, and the enforcement of the worship are just in the future. And unless all these positions can be overthrown, the seven last plagues must be assigned to the future.

But there are other reasons for locating them in the future and not in the past:—

1. Under the fifth plague, men blaspheme God because of their *sores*, the same sores, of course, caused by the outpouring of the first plague. This shows that these plagues all fall upon the *same generation* of men, some being no doubt swept off by each one, but yet some surviving through the terrible scenes of them all; a fact utterly subversive of the position that they commenced far in the past, and occupy centuries each in their fulfillment; for how then could those who experience the first plague be alive under the fifth?

2. These plagues are the wine of God's wrath without mixture, threatened by the third angel, chap. 14:10; 15:1. Such language cannot be applied to any judgments visited upon the earth while Christ pleads between his Father and our fallen race. Hence we must locate them in the future, when probation shall have closed.

3. Another and more definite testimony as to the commencement and duration of these plagues, is found in chap. 15:8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The temple here introduced is evidently that which is mentioned in chap. 11:19, where it says, "The temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." In other words, we have before us the

heavenly sanctuary. The testimony is, then, that when the seven angels with the seven golden vials receive their commission, the temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God, and no man can enter into the temple, or sanctuary, till they have fulfilled their work; there will therefore be no ministration in the sanctuary during this time; consequently these vials are not poured out till the close of the ministration in the tabernacle above, but immediately follow that event; for Christ is then no longer a mediator; mercy, which has long stayed the hand of vengeance, pleads no more; the servants of God are sealed. What could then be expected but that the "storm of vengeance should fall," and earth be swept with the besom of destruction?

Having now shown the chronology of these judgments, that they are before us in the very near future, treasured up against the day of wrath, we proceed to inquire into their nature, and what will result when the solemn and fearful mandate shall go forth from the temple to the seven angels, saying, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." Here we are called to look into the "armory of the Lord," and behold the "weapons of his indignation." Jer. 50: 25. Here are brought forth the treasures of hail, which have been reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. Job 38: 22, 23.

The Vials and their Effects. "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men

which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

We know of no reason why we should not regard this as strictly literal. These plagues are almost identical with those which God inflicted upon the Egyptians as he was about to deliver his people from the yoke of bondage; the literality of which we have never heard, called in question. God is now about to crown his people with their final deliverance and redemption, and his judgments will be manifested in a manner no less literal and terrible. What the sore here threatened is, we are not informed. Perhaps it may be similar to the parallel plague which fell upon Egypt. Ex. 9: 8–11.

VERSE 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

Probably a more infectious and deadly substance can scarcely be conceived of than the blood of a dead man; and the thought that the great bodies of water on the earth, which are doubtless meant by the term sea, will be changed to such a state under this plague, presents a fearful picture. We have here the remarkable fact that the term, living soul, is applied to irrational animals, the fish and living creatures of the sea. This is, we believe, the only instance of such an application in the English version; in the original, however, it occurs frequently; showing that the term, as applied to man in the beginning, Gen. 2: 7, cannot be taken to show that he is endowed with any immaterial and immortal essence.

VERSE 4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6. For they have shed the blood of saints, and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Such is the description of the terrible retribution for the "blood of saints," shed by violent hands, which will be given to those who have done, or wished to do, such deeds. And though we can hardly conceive of the horrors of that hour, when the fountains and rivers of water shall be like blood, the justice of God will stand vindicated, his judgments approved. Even the angels are heard exclaiming, Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets. Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

It may be asked how the last generation of the wicked can be said to have shed the blood of saints and prophets, since the last generation of saints are not to be slain. A reference to Matt. 23: 34, 35; 1 John 3: 15, will explain. These scriptures show that guilt attaches to motive no less than to action. And no generation ever formed a more determined purpose to give the saints to indiscriminate slaughter than the present one will, not far in the future. See chap. 12: 17; 13: 15. In motive and purpose they do shed the blood of saints and prophets.

It would seem that not one of the human race could survive a long continuance of a plague so terrible as this. We hence conclude that this one may be limited in its duration, as was the similar one on Egypt. Ex. 7: 17–21.

VERSE 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9. And men were scorched with great heat and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

It is worthy of notice that every succeeding plague tends to augment the calamity of the previous ones, and heighten the anguish of the guilty sufferers. We have now a noisome and grievous sore preying upon men, inflaming their blood, and pouring its feverish influence through their veins. In addition to this they have only blood to allay their burning thirst; and, as if to crown all, power is given unto the sun, and he pours upon them a flood of liquid fire, and they are scorched with great heat. Here, as the record runs, their woe first finds utterance in horrid blasphemy.

VERSE 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast: and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11, And blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

An important fact is established by this testimony: It is, that the plagues do not at once destroy all their victims; for some who were at first smit-

ten with sores, we find still living under the fifth vial, and gnawing their tongues for pain. An illustration of this vial will be found in Ex. 10:21–23. It is poured upon the seat of the beast, the papacy. The seat of the beast is wherever the papal see is located, which thus far has been, and we think will continue to be, the city of Rome. "His kingdom," probably embraces all those who are subjects of the pope in an ecclesiastical point of view.

As those who place the plagues in the past, have the first five already wholly accomplished, we here pause a moment to inquire where in past ages the judgments here threatened have been fulfilled. Can judgments so terrible be inflicted and nobody know it? Then where is the history of the fulfillment? When did a noisome and grievous sore fall upon a specified and extensive portion of mankind? When did the sea become as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul die in it? When did the fountains and rivers become blood, and people have blood to drink? When did the sun so scorch men with fire as to extort from them curses and blasphemy? And when did the subjects of the beast gnaw their tongues for pain, and at the same time blaspheme God on account of their sores? Interpreters who thus foolishly put such scenes in the past, where a shadow of fulfillment cannot be shown, openly invite the scoffs and ridicule of the skeptic and infidel against God's holy book, and furnish them with potent weapons for their nefarious work. In these

plagues, says Inspiration, is *filled up* the wrath of God; but if they can be fulfilled and nobody know it, who shall henceforth consider his wrath so terrible a thing, or shrink from his judgments when they are threatened?

VERSE 12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

What is the great river Euphrates, which is the object of this vial? One view is that it is the literal river Euphrates in Asia; the other is, that it is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows. We incline to the latter opinion for the following reasons:—

1. It would be difficult to see what end would be gained by the drying up of the literal river, as that would not offer an obstruction at all serious to the progress of an advancing army. And it should be noticed that the drying up takes place to prepare the way of the *kings* of the East, that is, regular military organizations, and not a promiscuous and

unequipped crowd of men, women, and children; like the children of Israel at the Red Sea, or at the Jordan. The Euphrates is only about 1,400 miles in length, or about one-third the size of the Mississippi. Cyrus, without difficulty, turned the whole river from its channel at his siege of Babylon; and notwithstanding the numerous wars that have been carried on along its banks, and the mighty hosts that have crossed and re-crossed its stream, we have never yet read that it had to be once dried up to let them pass.

2. It would be as necessary to dry up the river Tigris as the Euphrates, the source of the former being only fifteen miles from the latter, in the mountains of Armenia, and it running nearly parallel with, and but a short distance from, the latter throughout its whole course. Yet the prophecy says nothing of the Tigris.

3. The *literal* drying up of rivers we understand takes place under the fourth vial, when power is given to the sun to scorch men with fire. Under this plague occur beyond question the scenes of drouth and famine so graphically described by Joel, Chap. 1:14–20; and as one result of these, it is expressly stated that "*the rivers of waters are dried up.*" The Euphrates will probably be no exception to this; hence, not much would remain to be literally dried up under the sixth vial.

4. These plagues, from the very nature of the case, must be manifestations of wrath and judg-

ments upon men. But if the drying up of the literal Euphrates is all that is brought to view, this plague is not of such a nature, and turns out to be no serious affair, after all.

These objections existing against considering it a literal river, watered by that river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the territory, which is the Ottoman or Turkish empire.

1. It is so used in other places in the Scriptures. See Isa. 8:7; Rev. 9:14. In this latter text, all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power; and being the first and only other occurrence of the word in the Revelation, it may well be considered as governing its use in this book.

2. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men, as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the others.

But, it may be objected to this, that while contending for the literality of the plagues, we nevertheless make one of them a symbol. We answer, No. A power is introduced, it is true, under the sixth vial, in its symbolic form, just as it is under the fifth, where we read of the seat of the beast, which is a well-known symbol; or as we read again in the first plague of the mark of the beast, his image and its worship, which are also symbols. All that we contend for is the literality of the judg-

ments that result from each vial, which are literal in this case, as in all the rest.

Again, it may be asked how the way of the kings of the East will be prepared by the drying up, or consumption, of the Ottoman power? The answer is obvious. For what is the way of these kings to be prepared? Ans. To come up to the great battle. Where is the battle to be fought? At Jerusalem. See Joel and Zephaniah. But Jerusalem is in the hands of the Turks. They hold possession of the land of Palestine and the sacred sepulchers. This is the bone of contention. On these the nations have fixed their covetous and jealous eyes. But though Turkey now possesses them, and others want them, it is nevertheless thought necessary to the tranquility of Europe that Turkey should be maintained in her position, in order to preserve, what is called, the "balance of power." Her office therefore at present seems to be merely like that of a large distended shell, which, so long as it can be kept from collapsing, serves to separate belligerent and hostile powers. Therefore the allied powers of Europe are pledged to sustain the integrity of the Sultan's throne. By them alone it is now maintained, and when they shall withdraw their hands, and leave it to itself, as we believe they will do under the sixth plague, that symbolic river will be clean dried up, Turkey will be no more, and the way will be all open for the nations to rush to the Holy Land. The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will

act a conspicuous part in the matter; for Joel says in reference to this scene, Let "the heathen" be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Those who place five of the plagues in the past, and contend that we are now living under the sixth, urge as one of their strongest arguments the fact that the Turkish empire is now wasting away; which takes place under the sixth vial. We reply, The event that takes place under the sixth vial, is the entire and utter consumption of that power, not its preliminary state of decay, which is all that we now witness. But it is necessary that the empire should for a time grow weak and powerless, in order to its utter dissolution when the plague shall come. This preliminary condition we now behold; the full end cannot be far in the future.

Another event to be noticed under this plague, is the issuing forth of the three unclean spirits to gather the nations to the great battle. We regard the agency now already abroad in the world, and known as Modern Spiritualism, as the means to be employed in this work. But the question may be asked, how we can think that a work is designated by it, which is already going on, when the spirits are not introduced into the prophecy until the sixth plague, which is still future.

We answer that in this, as in many other things, the agencies which Heaven designs to employ in the accomplishment of certain ends, are being for a while trained to the part which they are to act. Thus before the spirits can have such absolute au-

thority over the race as to gather them to battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords, they must first win their way among the nations of the earth, and cause their teaching to be received as of divine authority, and their word as law. This work they are now doing; and when they shall have once gained due influence over the nations in question, what fitter instruments could be employed to gather them to so rash and hopeless an enterprise?

To many it may seem incredible that the nations should be willing to engage in such an unequal warfare as to go up to battle against the Lord of hosts; but it is one province of these spirits of devils to deceive; for they go forth working miracles, and thereby deceive the kings of the earth that they should believe a lie.

The sources from which these spirits issue, denote that they will work among three great religious divisions of mankind, represented by the dragon, beast, and false prophet, or, Paganism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

But what is the force of the exhortation in verse 15? Probation must have closed, and Christ have left his mediatorial position, before the plagues begin to fall. And is there danger of falling after that? It will be noticed that this warning is spoken in connection with the working of the spirits. We infer, therefore, that it goes back and is applicable from the time these spirits begin to work, to the close of probation; that by an interchange of tenses, common to the Greek language, the present

tense is put for the past; as if it had read, Blessed is he that hath watched and kept his garments; as the shame and nakedness of all who have not done this, will at this time especially appear.

"And he gathered them." Who are the ones here spoken of, to be gathered? and what agency is to be used in gathering them? If the word *them* refers to the kings of verse 14, it is certain that no good agency would be made use of to gather them; and if the spirits are referred to by the word *he*, why is it in the singular number? The peculiarity of this construction has led some to read the passage thus: And he [Christ] gathered them [the saints] into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon [the illustrious city, or New Jerusalem]. But this position is untenable. The following criticism, which appeared not long since in a religious magazine, seems to shed the true light upon this passage. The writer says:—

"It seems to me that verse 16 is a continuation of verse 14, and that the antecedent of αὐτοὺς [them] is 'the kings' mentioned in verse 14. For this latter verse says, 'Which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather *them*,' etc., and in verse 16 it says, 'And *he* gathered *them*.' Now, in the Greek, 'a neuter plural regularly takes a verb in the singular.' (See Sophocles' Greek Grammar, § 151, 1.) Might not, therefore, the subject of the verb συνήγαγεν [gathered,] (verse 16,) be τα πνεύματα [the spirits,] of verse 14,

and thus the 'gathering' mentioned in the two verses, be *one* and the *same?*

"And if this is to be a gathering of 'the kings of the earth, and of the whole world,' will it not be for the purpose mentioned in the text, viz., 'to gather them to the *battle* of that great day of God Almighty?'"

In accordance with this criticism we find several translations using the plural instead of the singular pronoun.

Mr. Wakefield in his translation of the New Testament renders this verse thus: "And *the spirits* gathered the kings together at a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

The Syriac Testament reads: "And *they* collected them together in a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

Sawyer's translation renders it: "And *they* assembled them in the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

Mr. Wesley's version of the New Testament reads: "And *they* gathered them together to the place which is called in the Hebrew, Armageddon."

Whiting's translation gives it: "And *they* gathered them into a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

Prof. Stuart of Andover College, a distinguished critic, though not a translator of the Scriptures, render it: "And THEY gathered them together," etc. De Wette, a German translator of the Bible, gives it the same turn as Stuart and the others.

Mr. Albert Barnes, whose Notes on the New Testament are so extensively used, refers to the same grammatical law as suggested by the criticism above quoted, and says, "The authority of De Wette and Prof. Stuart is sufficient to show that the construction which they adopt is authorized by the Greek, as indeed no one can doubt, and perhaps this construction accords better with the context than any other construction proposed." Thus it will be seen that there are weighty reasons for reading the text, "*they* gathered them together," etc., instead of "*he* gathered." And by these authorities it is shown that the persons gathered are the minions of Satan, not saints; that it is the work of the spirits, not of Christ; and that the place of assemblage is not in the New Jerusalem at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but at Armageddon (or Mount Megiddo), "at the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Mount Megiddo, overlooking the plain in the half tribe of Manasseh, was the place in which Barak and Deborah destroyed Sisera's army, and in which Josiah was routed by Pharaoh Necho.

VERSE 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness

of his wrath. 20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Thus has inspiration described to us the last judgment which God has appointed to rebellious man in his present state. Some of the plagues we have seen are local in their application; but this one is poured out into the air. The air envelops the whole earth; hence we may conclude that this plague will envelop equally the habitable globe. It will be universal. The air will be tainted.

The gathering of the nations having taken place under the sixth vial, the battle remains to be fought under the seventh; and we here find brought to view the instrumentalities with which God will slay the wicked. At this time it may be said, "The Lord hath opened his armory, and brought forth the weapons of his indignation."

There were voices. Above all will be heard the voice of God. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake. But the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3:16. See also Jer. 25:30; Heb. 12:26. This will cause the great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth.

And thunders and lightnings. Allusion again to the judgments of Egypt. See Ex. 9:23. The

great city is divided into three parts; that is, the three grand divisions of the false and apostate religion of the world (the great city), Paganism, Catholicism, and backslidden Protestantism, seem to be set apart each to receive its appropriate doom. The cities of the nations fall. Universal desolation spreads over the earth. Every island flees away and the mountains are not found. And great Babylon comes in remembrance before God. Read her judgments more fully in chap. 18.

Some faint idea of the terrible effect of such a scene as is here predicted, may be inferred from the following sketch of a hailstorm on the Bosporus, by our countryman, the late Commodore Porter, in his "Letters from Constantinople and its Environs," vol. i., p. 44. He says:—

"We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud, rising in the west, gave indications of approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and with a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some gulls near, I supposed it to be them darting for fish; but soon after discovered that they were large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder, or ten thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosporus was in a foam, as though heaven's artillery had been charged upon us and our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable; our umbrellas were raised to protect us; the lumps of ice stripped them into rib-

bons. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled, and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of the three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed; another was much injured in the shoulder; Mr. H. received a blow in the leg; my right hand was somewhat disabled, and all more or less injured.

"It was the most awful and terrific scene I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I ever should be exposed to another! Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boat, and some of them fell with such violence as certainly to have broken an arm or leg had they struck us in those parts. One of them struck the blade of an oar and split it. The scene lasted perhaps five minutes; but it was five minutes of the most awful feelings I ever experienced. When it passed over, we found the surrounding hills covered with masses of ice; I cannot call it hail; the trees stripped of their leaves and limbs; and everything looking desolate. The scene was awful, beyond all description!

"I have witnessed repeated earthquakes; the lightning has played, as it were, about my head; the wind roared, and the waves at one moment have thrown me to the sky, and the next have sunk me into a deep abyss. I have been in action, and have seen death and destruction around me in every shape of horror; but I never before had the feeling of awe which seized me on this occasion, and still haunts, and I fear forever will haunt, me. My porter, the boldest of my family, who had ventured an instant

from the door, had been knocked down by a hail-stone, and had they not dragged him in by the heels, would have been battered to death. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village, and I have heard of broken bones in abundance. Imagine to yourself the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the earth."

Reader, if such were the desolating effects of a hail-storm of ice, which discharged stones the size of a man's fist, weighing at most a pound or so, who can depict the consequences of that coming storm in which ,'EVERY STONE" shall be of the weight of a talent? As sure as God's word is truth, he is thus soon to punish a guilty world. May it be ours, according to the promise, to have "sure dwellings" and "quiet resting places" in that terrific hour. Isa. 32:18, 19.

And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven. This is the last instrumentality brought to bear upon the shelterless heads of the wicked—the bitter dregs of the seventh vial. God has solemnly declared to the wicked, saying, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." Isa. 28:17. See also Isa. 30:30. And he asks Job if he has seen the treasures of the hail, which he has reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. Job 38:22, 23.

Every stone about the weight of a talent. A talent, according to various authorities, as a weight, is about fifty-seven pounds avoirdupois. What could withstand the force of stones of such an enormous weight falling from heaven? But mankind, at this time, will have no shelter. The cities have fallen in a mighty earthquake, the islands have fled away, and the mountains are not found. Again the wicked give vent to their woe in blasphemy; for the plague of the hail is "exceeding great."

"And there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven from the throne, saying, It is done!" Thus all is finished. The cup of human guilt has been filled up. The last soul has availed itself of the plan of salvation. The books are closed. The number of the saved is completed. The final period is placed to this world's history. The vials of God's wrath are poured out upon a corrupt generation. The wicked have drunk them to the dregs, and sunk into the realm of death for a thousand years. Reader, where do you wish to be found after that great decision?

But what is the condition of the saints while the "overflowing scourge" is passing over? They are the special subjects of God's protection, without whose notice not a sparrow falls to the ground. Many are the promises which come crowding in to afford them comfort, summarily contained in the beautiful and expressive language of the psalm, which alone we have space to quote:—

Ps. 91:2–10. "I will say of the Lord, he is my

refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

Chapter XVII.

BABYLON—THE MOTHER.

VERSE 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; 2; With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5: And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.

In verse 19 of the preceding chapter, we were informed that "great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The apostle now takes up more particularly the subject of this Great Babylon; and in order to a full presentation of it, goes back and gives some of the facts of her past history. That this apostate woman is a symbol of the Roman Catholic church, is generally believed by Protestants.

Between this church and the kings of the earth there has been illicit connection, and with the wine of her fornication, or her false doctrines, the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk.

This prophecy is more definite than others applicable to the Roman power, in that it distinguishes between church and State. We here have the woman, the church, seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, the civil power, by which she is upheld, and which she controls and guides to her own ends, as a rider controls a horse.

The vesture and decorations of this woman, as brought to view in verse 4, are in striking harmony with the application made of this symbol; for purple and scarlet are the chief colors in the robes of popes and cardinals; and among the myriads of precious stones which adorn her service, according to an eye-witness, silver is scarcely known, and gold itself looks but poorly. And from the golden cup in her hand, symbol of purity of doctrine and profession, which should have contained only that which is pure, upright, and in accordance with truth, there came forth only abominations, and wine of her fornication, fit symbol of her abominable doctrines, and still more abominable practices.

This woman is explicitly called Babylon. Is Rome, then, Babylon, to the exclusion of all other religious bodies? No; from the fact that she is called the *mother* of harlots, which shows that there are other independent religious organizations, which constitute the apostate daughters, and belong to the same great family.

VERSE 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

Why should John wonder with great astonishment when he saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints? Was persecution of the people of God any strange thing in his day? Had he not seen Rome launch its most fiery anathemas against the church, being himself in banishment under its cruel power at the time he wrote? Why, then, should he be astonished as he looked forward and saw Rome still persecuting the saints? The secret of his wonder was just this: All the persecution he had witnessed had been from pagan Rome, the open enemy of Christ. It was not strange that pagans should persecute Christ's followers. But when he looked forward and saw a church professedly *Christian*, persecuting the followers of the Lamb, and drunken with their blood, he could but wonder with great amazement.

VERSE 8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10. And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come;

and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

The beast of which the angel here speaks is evidently the scarlet beast. A wild beast like the one thus introduced, is the symbol of an oppressive and persecuting power; and while the Roman power, as a nation, had a long, uninterrupted existence, it passed through certain phases, during which this symbol would be inapplicable to it, and during which time, consequently the beast, in such prophecies as the present, might be said not to be, or not to exist. Thus: Rome in its pagan form was a persecuting power in its relation to the people of God, during which time it constituted the beast that was. But the empire was nominally converted to Christianity. There was a transition from paganism to another phase of religion, falsely called Christian; and during a brief period, while this transition was going on, it lost its ferocious and persecuting character, and then it could be said of the beast, that it was not. Time passed on, and it degenerated into popery, and again assumed its blood-thirsty and oppressive character, and then constituted the beast that "yet is," or in John's day was to be.

The seven heads are explained to be, first, seven mountains, and then seven kings or forms of government; for the expression in verse 10, "and *there* are seven kings," should read, and *these* are seven kings. Five are fallen, says the angel, or passed away; one is; the sixth was then reigning: another was to

come, and continue a short space ; and when the beast re-appeared in its bloody and persecuting character, it was to be under the eighth form of government which was to continue till the beast went into perdition. The seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman empire, are usually enumerated as follows: 1. Kingly. 2. Consular. 3. Decemvirate. 4. Dictatorial. 5. Triumvirate. 6. Imperial ; and 7. Papal. Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs, Dictators, and Triumvirs, had passed away in John's day. He was living under the imperial form. Two more were to arise after his time. One was only to continue a short space, and hence is not usually reckoned among the heads ; while the last, which is usually denominated the seventh, is in reality the eighth. The head which was to succeed the imperial and continue a *short space* could not be the papal ; for that has continued longer than all the rest put together. We understand, therefore, that the papal head is the eighth, and that a head of short continuance intervened between the imperial and papal. In fulfillment of this, we read that after the imperial form had been abolished, there was a ruler who, for about the space of 60 years, governed Rome under the title of the "Exarchate of Ravenna." Thus we have the connecting link between the imperial and papal heads. The third phase of the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, is the Roman power under the rule of the papacy, and in this form it ascends out of the bottomless pit, or bases its power on pretensions which have no foundation but a mixture of Christian errors and pagan superstitions.

VERSE 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

On the subject of the ten horns, there is no controversy. All agree that they symbolize the ten kingdoms that arose out of the Roman empire, namely, the Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards. They receive power one hour [Gr. ὥρα, *hora*, an indefinite space of time,] with the beast; that is, they reign a length of time *contemporaneously* with the beast, during which time they give to it their power and strength.

Croly in his work on the Apocalypse, offers this comment on verse 12: "The prediction defines the epoch of the papacy by the formation of the ten kingdoms of the western empire. 'They shall receive power *one hour* with the beast.' The translation should be, 'in the same era' (μίαν ὥραν). The ten kingdoms shall be *contemporaneous*, in contradistinction to the 'seven heads,' which were *successive*."

This language must refer to the past, when the kingdoms of Europe were unanimous in giving their support to the papacy, and upholding it in all its pretensions. It cannot apply to the future; for after the commencement of the time of the end, they were to take away its power, and consume and destroy

it to the end ; Dan. 7 : 26 ; and the treatment which these kingdoms are finally to bestow upon it, is expressed in verse 16, where it is said that they shall hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

These make war with the Lamb, verse 14. Here we are carried into the future to the time of the great and final battle ; for at this time the Lamb has assumed the title of King of kings and Lord of lords, a title which he does not assume till his second coming. Chap. 19 : 11–16.

VERSE 15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues. 16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

In verse 15, we have simply a definition of the scripture symbol of waters ; they denote peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. The angel told John, while calling his attention to this subject, that he would show him the judgment of this great harlot. In verse 16, that judgment is specified. This chapter, has, we think, more especial reference to the old mother, or Catholic Babylon. In the next chapter, if we mistake not, we find brought to view the character and destiny of another great branch of Babylon, namely, the harlot daughters.

Chapter XVIII.

BABYLON—THE DAUGHTERS.

VERSE 1. And after these things I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Some movement of mighty power is symbolized in these verses. The consideration of a few facts will guide us unmistakably to the application. In chapter 14, we had a message announcing the fall of Babylon. Babylon is a term which embraces not only the Roman Catholic church, but religious bodies which have sprung from her, bringing many of her errors and traditions along with them.

The fall of Babylon here spoken of cannot be literal destruction; for there are events to take place in Babylon after her fall, which utterly forbid this idea; as, for instance, the people of God are there after her fall, and are called out in order that they may not

receive of her plagues; and in these plagues is embraced her literal destruction. The fall is therefore a moral one; for the result of it is, that Babylon becomes the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird; she, as a consequence of her fall, piles up an accumulation of sins even to the heavens, and becomes subject to the judgments of God which can no longer be delayed.

And since the fall here introduced is a moral one, it must apply to some branch of Babylon besides, or outside of, the pagan or papal divisions; for the false character of the one, and the corrupt character of the other, of these was fully developed before they were introduced into prophecy. And, further, as this fall is said to occur but a short period before Babylon's final destruction, certainly this side of the rise and blasphemous career of the papal church, this testimony cannot apply to any religious organizations but such as have sprung from that church. These started out on reform. They run well for a season, and had the approbation of God; but fettering themselves with creeds, they have failed to keep pace with the advancing light of God's truth, and hence have been left in a position where they will finally develop a character as evil and odious in the sight of God, as that of the church from which they first started out as dissenters or reformers. As the point before us is to many a very sensitive one, we will let members of these various denominations here speak for themselves.

The *Tennessee Baptist* says: "This woman [popery] is called the *mother* of harlots and abominations. Who are the daughters? The Lutheran, the Presbyterian, and the Episcopalian churches are all branches of the [Roman] Catholic. Are not these denominated 'harlots and abominations' in the above passage? *I so decide.* I could not with the stake before me decide otherwise. Presbyterians and Episcopalians compose a part of Babylon. They hold the distinctive principles of *Papacy, in common* with Papists."

Alexander Campbell says: "The worshiping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, incased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots—the Church of Rome."

Again he says: "A reformation of popery was attempted in Europe full three centuries ago. It ended in a Protestant hierarchy, and swarms of dissenters. Protestantism has been reformed into Presbyterianism—that into Congregationalism—and that into Baptistism, etc., etc. Methodism has attempted to reform all, but has reformed itself into many forms of Wesleyanism. All of them retain in their bosom,—in their ecclesiastic organizations, worship, doctrines, and observances,—various relics of popery. They are at best a reformation of popery, and only reformations in part. The doctrines and traditions of men yet impair the power

and progress of the gospel in their hands."—*On Baptism*, p. 15.

Mr. O. Scott (Wesleyan Methodist,) says: "The church is as deeply infected with a desire for worldly gain as the world.

"The churches are making a god of this world.

"Most of the denominations of the present day might be called *churches of the world*, with more propriety than churches of Christ.

"The churches are so far gone from primitive Christianity that they need a fresh regeneration—a new kind of religion."

Says the *Golden Rule:* "The Protestants are out-doing the Popes in splendid, extravagant folly in church building. Thousands on thousands are expended in gay and costly ornaments to gratify pride and a wicked ambition, that might and should go to redeem the perishing millions! Does the evil, the folly, and the madness of these proud, formal, fashionable worshipers, stop here?

"These splendid monuments of popish pride, upon which millions are squandered in our cities, virtually exclude the poor for whom Christ died, and for whom he came *especially* to preach."

The report of the Michigan Yearly Conference, published in the *True Wesleyan* of Nov. 15, 1851, says: "The world, commercial, political, and ecclesiastical are alike, and are together going in the broad way that leads to death. Politics, commerce, and nominal religion, all connive at sin, reciprocally aid each other, and unite to crush the poor. False-

hood is unblushingly uttered in the forum and in the pulpit; and *sins that would shock the moral sensibilities of the heathen, go unrebuked in all the great denominations of our land.* These churches are like the Jewish church when the Saviour exclaimed, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.'" It is certainly no better now.

Robert Atkins, in a sermon preached in London, says: "The truly righteous are diminished from the earth, and no man layeth it to heart. The professors of religion of the present day, in every church are lovers of the world, conformers to the world, lovers of creature-comfort, and aspirers after respectability. They are called to *suffer* with Christ, but they shrink even from reproach.

"Apostasy, apostasy, apostasy, is engraven on the very front of every church; and did they know it, and did they feel it, there might be hope; but alas! they cry, 'We are rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing.'"

Abundance of similar testimony might be produced, from persons in high standing in these various denominations, written, not for the purpose of being captious and finding fault, but from a vivid sense of the fearful condition to which these churches have fallen. The term Babylon, as applied to them, is not a term of reproach, but is simply expressive of the confusion and diversity of sentiment that exists among them. Babylon need not have fallen, but might have been healed, Jer. 51: 9, by the reception of the truth. Rejecting it,

confusion and dissensions still reign within her borders, and worldliness and pride are fast choking out every plant of heavenly growth.

But at what time do the verses now before us have their application? When may the movement here symbolized be looked for? If the position we have taken is correct, that these churches, this branch of Babylon, experienced a moral fall by the rejection of the first message of chapter 14, the announcement in the chapter under consideration could not have gone forth previous to that time. It is, then, either synonymous with the message of the fall of Babylon, in chapter 14, or it is given at a later period than that. Is it synonymous with that? It is not; for that merely announces the fall of Babylon, while this adds several particulars, which at that time were neither fulfilled nor in the process of fulfillment. As we are therefore to look this side of 1844, where the previous message went forth, for the announcement brought to view in this chapter, we inquire, Has any such message been given since that time to the present? The answer must still be in the negative; hence this message is yet future. But we are now having the third angel's message, which is the last to be given before the coming of the Son of Man. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the first two verses of this chapter constitute a feature of the third message, to appear when this message shall be proclaimed with power, and the whole earth be lightened with its glory.

The work brought to view in verse 2, is in proc-

ess of accomplishment, and will soon be completed, by the work of spiritualism. Spirits of devils are secretly but rapidly working their way into the religious denominations above referred to, the creeds of which, having been formulated under the influence of the wine [errors] of Babylon, render these denominations unable to resist their insidious approach.

Verse 3 shows the wide extent of the influence of Babylon, and the evil that has resulted from her course, and hence the justness of her punishment. The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the *abundance* of her delicacies. Who take the lead in all the extravagances of the age? Church members. Who load their tables with the richest and choicest viands? Church members. Who are foremost in extravagance in dress, and all costly attire? Church members. Who are the very personification of pride and arrogance? Church members. Where shall we look for the very highest exhibition of the luxury, vain show, and pride of life, resulting from the vanity and sin of the race? Ans. To a modern church assembly on a pleasant Sunday.

But there is a redeeming feature in this picture. Degenerate as Babylon has become as a body, there are exceptions to the general rule; for God has still a people there; and she must be entitled to some regard on their account until they are called from her communion. Nor shall we have to wait long for this call; for soon, if we mistake not, Babylon will become so fully leavened with the influence of these evil agents, that her condition will be fully

manifest to all the honest in heart, and the way be all prepared for the work which the apostle now introduces.

VERSE 4. And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5. For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. 7. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

The voice coming from Heaven, denotes that it will be a message of power, attended with heavenly glory. The fact that God's people are called out so as not to be partakers of her sins, shows that it is not till a certain time that people become guilty by being connected with Babylon; and this explains how it can be said of the 144,000, Rev. 14 : 4, many of whom are the very ones here called out, that they were not defiled with women.

Verses 6 and 7 we regard as a prophetic declaration that she will be rewarded or punished according to her works. As she has filled up the cup of persecution to the saints, so the angel of the Lord will persecute her, Ps. 35 : 6, and judgments from on high will bring upon her, in a two-fold degree,

the evil which she thought to bring upon the saints.

The day in which her plagues come, mentioned in verse 8, must be a prophetic day, or at least cannot be a literal day; for it would be impossible for famine to come in that length of time. The plagues of Babylon are without doubt the seven last plagues which have been already examined; and we infer from the language of this verse, in connection with Isa. 34 : 8, that a year will be occupied in that terrible visitation.

VERSE 9. And the kings of the earth, who have commited fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.

The infliction of the very first plague must result in a complete suspension of traffic in those articles of luxury for which Babylon is noted. And when the merchants of these things, who are to a great extent citizens of this symbolic city, and who have been made rich by their traffic in these things, suddenly find themselves and their neighbors smitten with putrefying sores, their traffic suspended, and their vast stores of merchandise on hand, but none to buy them, they lift up their voices in lamentation for the fate of this great city; for if there is anything which will draw from the men of this generation a *sincere* cry of distress, it is that which

touches their treasures. And there is a fitness in this retribution. They who but a short time before had issued a decree that the saints of God should neither buy nor sell, now find themselves put under the same restriction by a far more effectual process.

The question may arise how persons involved in the same calamity can stand *afar off* and lament etc. But it must be remembered that this desolation is brought to view under a figure; and that figure is a city visited with destruction. Should calamity come upon a literal city, it would be natural for its inhabitants to flee from that city, if they had opportunity, and standing afar off, lament its fall; and just in proportion to their terror and amazement at the evil impending, would be the distance at which they would stand from their devoted city. Now the figure of the apostle would not be complete without a feature of this kind; and so he uses it, not to imply that people would literally flee from the symbolical city, which would be impossible, but to denote their *terror* and *amazement* at the descending judgments.

VERSE 12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13, And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

In these verses we have an enumeration of great Babylon's merchandise, among which, it will be

noticed are slaves and souls of men. The church has been the great bulwark of American slavery; and previous to the great rebellion, at least six hundred thousand slaves were held by members of the different churches in the South. The movement for the emancipation of these slaves, did not originate with the churches, north or south. Hence they are in nowise relieved from the guilt of this sin, by the fact that the government, as a military necessity, has abolished slavery. Had the matter been left to the church, literal slavery would have continued to the end; but may there not be allusion here also to slavery of conscience, by the creeds of these bodies, which in some cases is more oppressive than physical bondage?

VERSE 14. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The fruits here mentioned we learn by reference to the original to be "autumnal fruits." In other words, the "delicacies of the season," upon which the luxurious professor so sets his pampered appetite, will be suddenly cut off. This of course is the work of the famine, which is the result of the fourth vial. Chap. 16 : 8.

VERSE 15. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17.

For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19. And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

The reader can readily imagine the cause of this universal voice of mourning, lamentation, and woe. Imagine the plague of sores preying upon men, the rivers turned to blood, the sea like the blood of a dead man, the sun scorching men with fire, their traffic gone, and their silver and gold unable to deliver them, and we need not wonder at their exclamations of distress, nor that shipmasters and sailors join in the general wail. Very different is the emotion the saints are called upon to exercise, as the following testimony shows:—

VERSE 20. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the

great men of earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The apostles and prophets are here called upon to rejoice over great Babylon in her destruction, as it is in close connection with this destruction that they will all be delivered from the power of death and the grave by the first resurrection.

Like a great millstone, Babylon sinks to rise no more. The various arts and crafts that have been employed in her midst, and have ministered to her desires, shall be practiced no more. The pompous music that has been employed in her imposing but formal and lifeless service, dies away forever. The scenes of festivity and gladness, when the bridegroom and bride have been led before her altars, shall be witnessed no more.

Her sorceries constitute her leading crime; and sorcery is a practice which is involved in the spiritualism of to-day. "And in her was found the blood of all that were slain upon the earth." From this we infer that ever since the introduction of a false religion into the world, Babylon has existed. In her has been found all along opposition to the work of God, and persecution of his people. In reference to the guilt of the last generation, see on chap. 16:6.

Chapter XIX.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE SAINTS.

VERSE 1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; 2; For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.

Continuing the subject of chap. 18, the apostle here introduces the song of triumph which the redeemed saints strike up on victor harps, when they behold the complete destruction of that great system of opposition to God and his true worship, comprehended in great Babylon. This destruction takes place, and this song is sung in connection with the second coming of Christ at the commencement of the thousand years. There can but one query arise on this scripture, and that is, how it can be said that her smoke rose up forever and ever. Does not this language imply eternity of suffering? Let it be remembered that this is borrowed language, and to gain a correct understanding of it we must go back to its first introduction

and consider its import as there used. In Isa. 34, will be found the language from which, if we mistake not, such expressions as these are borrowed. Under the figure of Idumea a certain destruction is brought to view, and it is said of that land that its streams should be turned into pitch, its dust into brimstone, that it should become burning pitch and not be quenched night nor day, but that its smoke should go up forever. Now this language is spoken, as all must concede, of one of two things; either of some particular country called Idumea, or of the whole earth under that name. In either case it is evident that the language must be limited. We think the whole earth is meant, from the fact that the chapter opens with an address to the earth and all that is therein, the world and all that come forth of it; and the indignation of the Lord is declared to be upon all nations. Now whether this refers to the depopulation and desolation of the earth at the second advent, or to the purifying fires that shall purge it of the effects of the curse at the end of the thousand years, the language must still be limited; for after all this, a renovated earth is to come forth, and be the abode of the nations of the saved throughout eternity. Three times this expression of smoke going up forever is used in the Bible: once here in Isa. 34, of the land of Idumea as a figure of the earth; again in Rev. 14, of the worshipers of the beast and image; and again in the chapter we are now considering, referring to the destruction of great Babylon; and all of them, we

understand, apply to the very same time and describe the same scenes, namely, the destruction visited upon this earth, the worshipers of the beast, and all the pomp of great Babylon, at the second advent of our Lord and Saviour.

VERSE 4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The Lord God omnipotent, the Father, reigneth, is the language of this song. He reigns at the present time, and has ever reigned, in reality, though sentence against an evil work has not been executed speedily; but now he reigns by open manifestations of his power in the reduction of all his foes.

"Rejoice . . . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Who is the "bride, the Lamb's wife," and what is the marriage? A vast field for thought is here opened, and material furnished for a more lengthy exposition than time or space will permit us here to give. We hold, in brief, that the Lamb's wife is

the New Jerusalem which is above. This will be noticed more fully on chapter 21. The marriage of the Lamb is his reception of this city. When he receives this city, he receives it as the ornament and metropolis of his kingdom; hence he receives with it, his kingdom and the throne of his father David. This we understand to be the event designated by the marriage of the Lamb. That the marriage relation is often taken to illustrate the union between Christ and his people, is granted; but the marriage of the Lamb here spoken of, is a definite event to take place at a definite time; and if the declaration that Christ is the head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife, Eph. 5: 23, proves that the church is now the Lamb's wife, then the marriage of the Lamb took place ages in the past; but that cannot be, according to this scripture, which locates it in the future. Paul told his Corinthian converts that he had espoused them to one husband, even Christ. This is true of all converts. But while this figure is used to denote the relation that they then assumed to Christ, was it a fact that the marriage of the Lamb took place in Corinth in Paul's day, and that it has been going on for the past eighteen hundred years? Further remarks on this point are deferred to a consideration of chap. 21.

But if the city is the bride, it may be asked how it can be said that she hath made *herself* ready? Answer. By the figure of personification, which

attributes life and action to inanimate objects. See a notable instance in Ps. 114. Again, a query may arise on verse 8, how a city can be arrayed in the righteousness of the saints. But if we consider that a city without inhabitants would be but a dreary and cheerless place, we see at once how this is. Reference is had to the countless number of its glorified inhabitants in their shining apparel. This raiment was *granted* to her. What is granted to her? Isa. 54, and Gal. 4: 21–31, will explain. To the new-covenant city are granted many more children than to the old. These are her glory and rejoicing. The goodly apparel of this city, so to speak, consists of the hosts of the redeemed and immortal ones who walk its golden streets.

VERSE 9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Many are the allusions to this marriage supper in the New Testament. It is referred to in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, Matt. 22: 1–14, again in Luke 14: 16–24. It is the time when we shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, when we are recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14: 12–15. It is the time when we shall drink the fruit of the vine new with our Redeemer in his heavenly kingdom. Matt. 26: 29; Mark 14: 25;

Luke 22:18. It is the time when we shall sit at his table in the kingdom, Luke 22:30, and he will gird himself and come forth and serve us. Luke 12:37. Blessed indeed are they who have the privilege of partaking of this glorious feast.

A word on verse 10, in reference to those who think they find here an argument for consciousness in death. The mistake which such persons make on this scripture is in supposing that the angel declares to John that he is one of the old prophets, come back to communicate with him. The person employed in giving the Revelation to John, is called an angel, and angels are not the departed spirits of the dead. Whoever takes the position that they are, is to all intents a spiritualist; for this is the very foundation-stone of their infamous theory. But the angel says no such thing. He simply says that he is the fellow-servant of John, as he had been the fellow-servant of his brethren the prophets. The term fellow-servant implies that they were all on a common footing as servants of the great God; hence he was not a proper object for John to worship. See on chap. 1:1, "His angel."

VERSE 11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God. 14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. 17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

With verse 11 a new scene is introduced. We are here carried back to the second coming of Christ, this time under the symbol of a warrior riding forth to battle. Why is he represented thus? Because he is going forth to war,—to meet "the kings of the earth and their armies," and this would be the only proper character in which to represent him on such an occasion. His vesture is dipped in blood. See a description of the same scene in Isa. 53:1–4. The armies of Heaven, the angels of God, follow him. Verse 15 shows how he rules the

nations with a rod of iron, when they are given him for an inheritance, as recorded in the second Psalm, which popular theology interprets to mean the conversion of the world. But would not such expressions as "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," be a very singular description of a work of grace upon the hearts of the heathen for their conversion?

Christ has at this time closed his mediatorial work, and laid off his priestly robes for kingly attire; for he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. This is in harmony with the character in which he here appears; for it was the custom of warriors anciently to have some kind of a title inscribed upon their vesture. Verse 17. What is to be understood by the angel standing in the sun? In chap 16:17, we read of the seventh vial being poured out into the air; from which it was inferred that as the air envelops the whole earth, that plague would be universal. May we not apply the same principle of interpretation here, and conclude that the angel standing in the sun and issuing his call from thence to the fowls of heaven to come to the supper of the great God, denotes that his proclamation will go wherever the sun's rays touch upon this earth? And the fowls will be obedient to the call, and fill themselves with the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, and horses. Thus while the saints are partaking of the marriage supper of the Lamb, the wicked are themselves food for the fowls of heaven.

The beast and the false prophet are taken. The false prophet is the one that works miracles before the beast. This proves him to be identical with the two-horned beast of chap. 13, to whom the same work, for the very same purpose, is there attributed. The fact that these are cast *alive* into the lake of fire, shows that these powers will not pass away and be succeeded by others, but be living powers at the second advent of Christ.

It appears from verse 21 that there is a remnant not numbered with the beast or false prophet. These are slain by the sword of him that sits upon the horse, which sword proceeds out of his mouth, This sword is doubtless what is spoken of elsewhere as the spirit of his mouth, and breath of his lips, with which the Lord shall slay the wicked at his appearing and kingdom. Isa. 11:4; 2 Thess. 2:8.

Chapter XX.

THE FIRST AND SECOND RESURRECTIONS.

Verse 1. And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The event with which this chapter opens seems to follow, in chronological order, the events of the preceding chapter. The inquiries that here arise are, Who is the angel that comes down from Heaven? What is the key and chain which he has in his hand? What is the bottomless pit? and, What is meant by binding Satan a thousand years?

1. *The angel.* Is this angel Christ, as some suppose? Evidently not. A bright ray of light is thrown from the old typical service directly upon this passage. Thus: Christ is the great High Priest of this dispensation. On the day of atonement, anciently, two goats were taken by the priest, upon which lots were cast, one for the Lord, and the other for the scape-goat. The one upon which the

Lord's lot fell, was then slain and his blood carried into the sanctuary, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, after which the sins of the people were confessed upon the head of the other, or scape-goat, and he was sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, or place not inhabited. Now as Christ is the priest of this dispensation, so, by arguments, a few of which we here introduce, Satan is shown to be the antitypical scape-goat.

(1.) The Hebrew word for scape-goat, as given in the margin of Lev. 16 : 8, is *Azazel.* On this verse, Jenks, in his Comprehensive Commentary, remarks: "Scape-goat. See diff. opin. in Bochart. Spencer, after the oldest opinion of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks *Azazel* is the *name of the devil;* and so Rosenmüller, whom see. The Syriac has, *Azzail* the angel (strong one) who revolted." The devil is here evidently pointed out. Thus we have the definition of the Scripture term in two ancient languages, with the oldest opinion of the Christians, in favor of the view that the scape-goat is a type of Satan.

Chas. Beecher, in "Redeemer and Redeemed," pp. 67, 68, says: "What goes to confirm this is, that the most ancient paraphrases and translations, treat Azazel as a proper name. The Chaldee paraphrase, and the targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, would certainly have translated it if it was not a proper name, but they do not. The Septuagint, or oldest Greek version, renders it by ἀποπομπαῖος (*apopompaios*), a word applied by the Greeks to a malign

deity, sometimes appeased by sacrifices. Another confirmation is found in the book of Enoch where the name Azalzel, evidently a corruption of Azazel, is given to one of the fallen angels, thus plainly showing what was the prevalent understanding of the Jews at that day.

"Still another evidence is found in the Arabic, where Azazel is employed as the name of the Evil Spirit. In addition to these, we have the evidence of the Jewish work Zohar, and of the Cabalistic and Rabbinical writers. They tell us that the following proverb was current among the Jews: 'On the day of atonement, a gift to Sammael.' Hence, Moses Gerundinensis feels called to say that it is not a sacrifice, but only done because commanded by God.

"Another step in the evidence is, when we find this same opinion passing from the Jewish to the early Christian church. Origen was the most learned of the Fathers, and on such a point as this, the meaning of a Hebrew word, his testimony is reliable. Says Origen: 'He who is called in the Septuagint ἀποπομπαῖος, and in the Hebrew Azazel, is no other than the devil.'

"In view, then, of the difficulties attending any other meaning, and the accumulated evidence in favor of this, Hengstenberg affirms with great confidence, that Azazel cannot be anything else but another name for Satan."

(2.) In the common acceptation of the word, the term "scape-goat" is applied to any one who has become obnoxious to the claims of justice; and while

it is revolting to all our conceptions of the character and glory of Christ, to apply this term to him, it must strike every one as a very appropriate designation of the devil, who is styled in Scripture, the accuser, adversary, angel of the bottomless pit, Beelzebub, Belial, dragon, enemy, evil spirit, father of lies, murderer, prince of devils, serpent, tempter, etc., etc.

(3.) Our third reason for this position is the very striking manner in which it harmonizes with the events to transpire in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as far as revealed to us in the Scriptures of truth.

We behold in the type, 1. The sin of the transgressor imparted to the victim. 2. We see that sin borne by the ministration of the priest and the blood of the offering, into the sanctuary. 3. On the tenth day of the seventh month we see the priest with the blood of the sin-offering for the people, remove all their sins from the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of the scape-goat. 4. The goat bears them away into a land not inhabited.

Answering to these events in the type, we behold in the antitype, 1. The great offering for the world, made on Calvary. 2. The sins of all those who avail themselves of the merits of Christ's shed blood, by faith in him, borne, by the ministration of Christ while pleading his own blood, into the new-covenant sanctuary. 3. After Christ, the minister of the true tabernacle [Heb. 8 : 2], has finished his ministration, he will remove the sins of his people from

the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of their author, the antitypical scape-goat, the devil. 4. The devil will be sent away with them into a land not inhabited.

This we believe to be the very event described in the verses under notice. The sanctuary service is, at the time here specified, closed. Christ lays upon the head of the devil the sins which have been transferred to the sanctuary, and which are imputed to the saints no more, and the devil is sent away, *not* by the hand of the High Priest, but by the hand of another person, according to the type, into a place here called the bottomless pit. Hence this angel is not Christ. For a full exposition of this subject see the work on "The Sanctuary and its Cleansing."

2. *The key and chain.* It cannot be supposed that the key and chain are literal; they are rather used merely as symbols of the power and authority with which this angel is clothed upon this occasion.

3. *The bottomless pit.* The original word signifies an abyss, bottomless, deep, profound. Its use seems to be such as to show that the word denotes any place of darkness, desolation, and death. Thus in Rev. 9:1, 2, it is applied to the barren wastes of the Arabian desert, and in Rom. 10:7, to the grave. But the passage which specially throws light upon the meaning of the word here, is Gen. 1:2, where we read that "darkness was upon the face of the deep." The word there rendered deep, is the same word that is here rendered bottomless pit; so that that might have been translated, "Darkness was upon the

face of the abyss, or bottomless pit." But we all know what is meant by the word "deep" as there used; it is applied to this earth in its chaotic state. Precisely this we believe it means in this third verse of Revelation 20. At this time, let it be borne in mind, the earth is a vast charnel house of desolation and death. The voice of God has shaken it to its foundations, the islands and mountains have been moved out of their places, the great earthquake has leveled to the earth the mightiest works of man, the seven last plagues have left their all-desolating footprints over the earth, the burning glory attending the coming of the Son of man has borne its part in accomplishing the general desolation, the wicked have been given to the slaughter, and their putrefying flesh and bleaching bones lie unburied, ungathered, and unlamented, from one end of the earth, to the other end thereof. Thus is the earth made empty and waste, and turned upside down. Isa. 24:1. Thus is it brought back again, partially at least, to its original state of confusion and chaos. See Jer. 4:19–26, especially verse 23. And what better term could be used to describe the earth thus rolling on its course of darkness and desolation for a thousand years, than that of the abyss, or bottomless pit? Here, we understand, Satan will be confined during this time, amid the ruin which, indirectly, his own hands have wrought, unable to flee from his habitation of woe, or to repair in the least degree its hideous ruin.

4. *The binding of Satan.* We well know that

Satan in order to work must have subjects upon whom to work. Without these he can do nothing. But during the thousand years of his confinement to this earth, all the saints are in Heaven beyond the power of his temptations, and the wicked are all in their graves, beyond his power to deceive. His sphere of action is circumscribed, he being at this time confined to this earth; and thus is he bound, being condemned throughout this period to a hopeless state of inactivity and imbecility. This, to a mind that has been so busy as his has been for the past six thousand years in deceiving the world, must be a punishment of the most intense severity.

Some attempt to grow merry over this exposition of the binding of Satan, which makes it to mean the placing beyond his reach of the subjects upon which he works, and which makes his being loosed to mean their being brought again, by a resurrection, under his influence. They tell us that we have mistaken the parties, and have the wicked bound, not the devil. Yet how often do we hear in the daily transactions of life such expressions as these: My way was completely hedged up; my hands were completely tied, etc. But do we understand, when persons make such expressions, that some insurmountable obstacle was literally thrown across the path they were traveling, or that their hands were literally confined with ropes and cords? No; but simply that a combination of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to act. Just so here; and why will not people grant to inspiration the same

liberty of speech that they give without question and without ridicule to their fellow-men in the common intercourse of life?

VERSE 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The exaltation of the saints. From the devil in his gloomy confinement, John now directs our attention to the saints in victory and glory,—the saints reigning on thrones,—all who are blessed and holy, and who, consequently, have part in the first resurrection. From that general assembly John then selects two classes as worthy of especial attention: first, the martyrs, those who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus; and secondly, those who had not worshiped the beast and his image. This class, the ones who refuse the mark of the beast and his image, are of course the ones who hear and obey the third message of Rev. 14; but these are not the ones who are beheaded for the witness of Jesus, as some have supposed who have contended that the last generation of saints were all to be slain. The word

rendered *which*, in the expression, "and which had not worshiped the beast," etc., shows that there is another class introduced. The word is ὅστις (*hostis*), and is defined by Liddell and Scott, "Whosoever, whichsoever, *any one who*, anything which;" and by Robinson, "One who, some one who, whosoever, whatsoever." As one class, John saw the martyrs, and as another, he saw *those who* had not worshiped the beast and his image.

It is true that ὅστις is sometimes used as a simple relative, as in 2 Cor. 3:14; Eph. 1:23, but never in such constructions as this, preceded by the conjunction καὶ.

Lest any one should say that our rendering, whosoever, would include millions of heathens and sinners who have not worshiped the beast, and promise to them a reign with Christ of a thousand years, we would call attention to the fact that the preceding chapter states that the wicked had all been slain, and the seal of death set upon them for a thousand years; and John is viewing only the righteous company who have part in the first resurrection.

The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. Whatever may be said to the contrary, no language could more plainly prove two resurrections; the first, a resurrection of the righteous at the commencement of the thousand years, and the second that of the wicked at the end of that period. On such as have part in the first resurrection, the second death will have no power. They can pass unharmed through the elements which de-

stroy the wicked like chaff. They will be able to dwell with devouring fire, and everlasting burnings; Isa. 33:14, 15; they will be able to go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men who have transgressed against the Lord, as the quenchless fire and undying worm are preying upon them. Isa. 66:24. The difference between the righteous and the wicked in this respect is seen again in the fact that, while God is to the latter a consuming fire, he is to his people, both a sun and shield.

The wicked who are raised at the end of the thousand years, as really live again as they have once lived on the earth. To deny this, is to do violence to this scripture. In what physical condition they will be raised, we are not informed. It is usual to say on this point, that what we have lost unconditionally in Adam, is restored unconditionally in Christ. With respect to physical condition this should not perhaps be taken in an unlimited sense; for we have lost greatly in stature and vital force, which need not be restored to the wicked. If they are brought back to the average mental and physical condition which they enjoyed during life, or the period of their probation, would not that be sufficient for them to receive at last understandingly the reward of their deeds?

VERSE 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And

they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

At the end of the one thousand years, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, in which the saints have dwelt in Heaven during that period, comes down, and is located upon the earth, and becomes the camp of the saints, around which the resurrected wicked come up numberless as the sand of the sea. The devil deceives them and thus brings them up to this battle. The deception must of course have reference to some advantage to be gained by fighting against the saints. They are probably deluded into the hope that they can overcome the saints, dispossess them of their city, and still hold possession of the earth. But fire comes down from God out of Heaven and devours them. The word here rendered devour, Prof. Stuart admits is, "intensive," and signifies "to eat up, devour, so that it denotes utter excision." This is the time of the perdition of ungodly men, the time when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and when the works that are in the earth shall be burnt up. 2 Pet. 3:1, 10. In the light of these scriptures, we can see how the wicked are to receive their recompense in the earth; Prov. 11:31; we can see also that it is not eternal life in misery, but an "utter excision," entire and complete destruction.

Two views deserve a passing notice at this point.

The first is that the earth is renewed at the second coming of Christ, and is the habitation of the saints during the thousand years. The other is that when Christ appears the second time, he sets up his kingdom in Palestine, and performs, in connection with his saints, a work of conquest over the nations that are left on the earth during the thousand years, and finally subdues them to himself.

One, among many objections to the first view, is, that it makes the wicked in their resurrection, come up, with the devil at their head, and tread with their unhallowed feet upon the purified and holy earth, and the saints who have held possession for a thousand years, are obliged to yield possession, and flee into the city. But we cannot believe that the saints' inheritance will ever be thus marred, or that the fair plains of the earth made new, will ever be polluted with the impious tread of the resuscitated wicked; for besides outraging all ideas of propriety, there is no scripture from which even an inference can be drawn to support it.

And as to the second view, one among many of its absurdities is, that notwithstanding Christ and his saints have conquered the earth during the thousand years, at the end of this period the wicked get the upper hands of them, they lose their territory, the work of a thousand years is undone, and they are compelled to beat an ignominious retreat into the city for shelter, leaving the earth to their undisputed sway. Those who wish may rack their brains in trying to harmonize the inconsistencies and absurdi-

ties of such theories, or may endeavor to draw consolation from the dubious prospect. For ourselves, we prefer better employment and a brighter hope.

In contrast with these theories, there is a beautiful harmony in the view herein presented; namely, that the saints are with Christ in Heaven during the thousand years, while the earth lies desolate; that at the end of that time, the saints and the city come down, the wicked dead are raised, and come up against it; that the latter there receive their judgment; and that from the purifying fires which destroy them, come forth the new heavens, and new earth, to be the abode of the righteous throughout endless ages.

From verse 10 some have argued that the devil alone was to be tormented day and night. But the testimony of this verse is more extensive than that. The verb, shall be tormented, is in the plural, and agrees with the beast and false prophet; whereas it would be in the singular number if it referred to the devil alone. It will be noticed that in the expression, "where the beast and false prophet are," *are* is a supplied word. It would be more proper to supply the words, were cast, answering to what was spoken of the devil just before. The sentence would then read, "The devil was cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet *were cast.*" They were cast in there and destroyed at the commencement of the thousand years. The individuals of which those organizations were composed, come up in the second resurrection, and a similar and final destruction is now visited upon them.

The Lake of Fire. Some reader may be inclined to ask for a definition of the lake of fire. As a comprehensive definition, may it not be called a symbol of the agencies which God employs to close up his controversy with the living wicked at the beginning of the thousand years, and with all the hosts of the ungodly at the end of that period? Literal fire will of course be largely employed in this work. We can better describe its effects than the thing itself. At the second coming of Christ, it is the flaming fire in which the Lord Jesus is revealed; it is the spirit of his mouth and brightness of his coming by which the Man of Sin is to be consumed; it is the fire in which great Babylon shall be utterly burned. Rev. 18:8. At the end of the thousand years, it is the day that burneth as an oven; Mal. 4:1; it is the fervent heat that shall melt the elements and the earth, and burn up the works that are therein; it is the fire of Tophet "prepared for the king" (the devil and his angels, Matt. 25:41), the pile whereof is deep and large, and which "the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle." Isa. 30:33. It is the fire that comes down from God out of Heaven. On the expression, "tormented day and night forever and ever," see on chap. 19:1–4.

VERSE 11. And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those

things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

With verse 11, John introduces another scene to take place in connection with the final doom of the ungodly. It is the great white throne of judgment before which they are assembled to receive their awful sentence of condemnation and death.

1. *The Books of Record.* They are judged out of the things written in the books; from which we learn the solemn fact that a record of all our deeds is kept on high. A faithful and unerring record is made by the angelic secretaries. The wicked cannot conceal from them any of their deeds of darkness. They cannot bribe them to pass over in their record any of their unlawful acts. They must meet them all again, and be judged accordingly.

2. *The Execution of the Sentence.* They are to be punished according to their works. The Scriptures declare that they shall be rewarded according to their deeds. There are, then, to be degrees in the punishment of the wicked; and it may be asked how this can be harmonized with the view that death is the punishment for sin, and comes upon all alike. Let us ask believers in eternal misery how they will maintain degrees in *their* system. They tell us the intensity of the pain endured will be in

each case proportioned to the guilt of the sufferer. But how can this be? Are not the flames of hell equally severe in all parts? and will they not equally affect *all* the immaterial souls cast therein? But God can interpose, it is answered, to produce the effect desired. Very well, then, we reply, cannot he also interpose, if necessary, and graduate the pain attendant upon the sinner's being reduced to a state of death as the climax of his penalty? So, then, this view is equal with the common one in this respect, while it possesses great advantage over it in another; for while that has to find its degrees of punishment in intensity of pain alone, the duration in all cases being equal, this may not only have degrees in pain, but in duration also; for while some may perish in a short space of time, the weary sufferings of others may be long drawn out. But yet, we apprehend that the bodily suffering will be but an unnoticed trifle, compared with the mental agony, that keen anguish which will rack their souls as they get a view of their incomparable loss, each according to his capacity of appreciation. The youth who had but little more than reached the years of accountability, and died perhaps with just enough guilt upon him to debar him from Heaven, being less able to comprehend his situation and his loss, will of course feel it less. To him of older years, more capacity, and consequently a deeper experience in sin, the burden of his fate will be proportionately greater. While the man of giant intellect and almost boundless comprehension, who thereby possessed greater influence for evil,

and hence was the more guilty for devoting his powers to that evil, being able to understand his situation fully, comprehend his fate, and realize his loss, will feel it most keenly of all. Into *his* soul indeed the iron will enter most intolerably deep. And thus, by an established law of mind, the sufferings of each may be most accurately adjusted to the magnitude of their guilt.

That the degree of suffering which each one is to endure, is taken into the account as a part of the punishment of their crimes, is evident from Rom. 2: 6–10; Paul here speaking of the future "judgment of God," says:—

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, [he will render] eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [he will render] indignation and wrath, *tribulation and anguish*, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile."

Why, it is asked, is the book of life brought forth on this occasion, when all who have part in the second resurrection, beyond which this scene is located, are already forejudged to the second death? We answer, That it may be seen that none of the names of all the multitude who die the second death, are in the book of life, and why they are not there; and if the names have ever been there, why they were not retained; that all the intelligences of the universe

may see that God acts with strict justice and impartiality.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Reader, is your name written in the book of life? Are you striving to avert in your own case the fearful doom that awaits the ungodly? Rest not till you have reason to believe that your name is registered in the list of those who are to share at last in the blessings of eternal life.

Chapter XXI.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

VERSE 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The New Heaven and Earth. By the first heaven and first earth, John unquestionably means the present heaven and earth, the heaven and earth which now are. Some have supposed that when the Bible speaks of the third Heaven, in which are paradise and the tree of life, 1 Cor. 12:2; Rev. 2:7, it refers to the Heaven which is yet future, and does not prove that there is a paradise and tree of life literally in existence at the present time. They base their view on the fact that Peter speaks of three heavens and earths; those before the flood, the ones which now are, and the ones which are to come. But all theories based upon this one fact are overturned by this first verse of Rev. 21; for John here reckons but two heavens and earths: the ones which now are, he calls the first, so that the future new heavens would be the second, and not the third, as Peter reckons. Hence it is certain that Peter did not design to lay down a numerical order, that we should speak of the one as the first, the other as the

second, and the last as the third. The object of his reasoning was simply to show that as a literal heaven and earth succeeded to the destruction of the earth by the flood, so a literal heaven and earth would result from the renovation of the present system by fire. There is no proof, therefore, that the Bible, when it speaks of the third heaven, refers simply to the third state of the present heavens and earth, for then all the Bible writers would have been uniform in their reckoning on this point. Thus the arguments of those who would endeavor to disprove of the idea of a literal paradise and tree of life at the present time, fall to the ground. We believe the Bible recognizes three heavens all existing in the present constitution of things; namely, the first, or atmospheric heaven, which the fowls of the air inhabit; the second, the planetary heaven, the region of the sun, moon, and stars; and the third, high above them all, where paradise and the tree of life are found, Rev. 2:7, where God has his residence and his throne, Rev. 22:1, 2, to which Paul was caught up in heavenly vision, 1 Cor. 12:2, to which Christ ascended when he left the earth, Rev. 12:5, where he now shares the throne of his Father as priest-king, Zech. 6:13, and where the glorious city stands awaiting the saints when they enter into life. Verse 2. Blessed be God that from that bright land intelligence has been brought to this far-off world of ours; and thanks be to his holy name that a way has been opened from the dark places of earth, which leads like a strait and shining path of light up to those blest abodes.

Because John says "And there was no more sea," the question is sometimes asked, "Is there, then, to be no sea in the new earth?" It does not seem to follow from this text that there will be none; for John is speaking only of the present heaven, and earth, and sea. It might be translated thus: "For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and the sea [οὐκ ἐστιν ἔτι] was no more;" that is, the old sea no longer appeared, any more than the old heaven, and old earth. And still a new sea might be located in the new earth.

Dr. Clarke on this passage says: "The *sea* no more appeared than did the first *heaven* and *earth*. All was made *new*, and probably the new sea occupied a different position and was differently distributed, from that of the old sea."

The river of life, of which we read in the following chapter, proceeding from the throne of God, and flowing through the broad street of the city of jasper and gold, must discharge its waters somewhere; and where else but into the new earth sea? But that three-quarters of the globe will be then, as now, abandoned to a waste of waters, cannot be expected. No more, certainly, may be looked for, than will be for the utility and beauty of the new world.

VERSE 2. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

In connection with the view which John has of the holy city coming down from God out of Heaven, a voice is heard, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. The conclusion naturally follows, that the tabernacle here mentioned is the city. This same city is called in John 14, the Father's house in which there are many mansions. If an objection should arise in any mind that this is too permanent a place to be called a tabernacle, we reply that the word tabernacle sometimes has the signification of a permanent dwelling-place. And it seems that the great God takes up his abode on this earth. We do not suppose that God is confined to this, or any other one of the worlds of his creation; but he here has a throne, and earth enjoys so much of his presence that it may be said that he dwells among men. And why should this be thought a strange thing? God's only begotten Son is here as ruler of his special kingdom; the holy city which is called the Father's house, and which, it is natural to suppose, will be the most beautiful and glorious place in the universe, will be here; the heavenly hosts take an interest in this world probably above what they feel in any other; yea, reasoning from one of the Saviour's parables, there will be more joy in Heaven over one world redeemed, than over ninety and nine which needed no redemption.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. He does this not literally; for there will be no tears in that kingdom for him to literally wipe away; but he does it by removing all the causes of tears.

VERSE 5. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that sits upon the throne is the same being that is mentioned in verses 11, 12, of the preceding chapter. He says, I make all things new; not, I make all new things. The earth is not destroyed, annihilated, and a new one created, but all things are made over new. Let us rejoice that these words are true and faithful. And when this is accomplished, "it is done." The dark shadow of sin has forever passed away from the universe. The wicked, root and branch, Mal. 4:1, are wiped out of the land of the living, and the universal anthem of praise and thanksgiving, Rev. 5:13, goes up from a redeemed world and a clean universe to a covenant-keeping God.

VERSE 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

The overcomers are Abraham's seed, and heirs

according to the promise. Gal. 3:29. The promise embraced the world, Rom. 4:13; and the saints go forth upon the new earth, not as servants or slaves, but as proprietors of the soil.

But the fearful, unbelieving, etc., have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The word "fearful" has been a trouble to some conscientious ones, who have had certain kinds of fears all along their pilgrimage. It may be well, therefore, to inquire what kinds of fears are here meant. It is not fears of our own weakness, or of the power of the tempter; it is not fears of sinning, or of falling out by the way, or of coming short at last. But it is a fear connected with unbelief; a fear of the ridicule and opposition of the world; a fear to trust in God, and walk out upon his promises; a fear that he will not fullfill what he has declared, and that consequently we shall be left to shame and loss for believing in him. This is most dishonoring to God. This is the fear which we are commanded not to have. Isa. 51:7. This is the fear which brings into condemnation, and will finally land those who cherish and yield to it, in the lake of fire, which is the second death.

VERSE 9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, 11, Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even

like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. 13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

This testimony is positive that the New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. The angel told John distinctly that he would show him the bride, the Lamb's wife; and we may be sure that he did not practice upon him a piece of deception, but fulfilled his promise to the very letter; but all that he did show him, was the New Jerusalem. It would be unnecessary to offer a word of proof that this city is not the church, were it not that popular theology has so mystified the Scriptures as to give it this application. This city, then, cannot be the church, because it would be absurd to talk of the church as lying foursquare, and having a north side, a south side, an east side, and a west side. It would be absurd to talk of its having a wall great and high, and in that wall twelve gates, three looking toward each of the four points of the compass. Indeed the whole description which we have given of the city in this chapter would be more or less an absurdity, as applied to the church.

Again, Paul in Galatians speaks of the same city, and says that it is the mother of us all, referring to the church. The church, then, is not the city itself, but the children of the city. And verse 24 of the

chapter under comment, speaks of the nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations, which are the saved, and on earth constitute the church, are distinct from the city, in the light of which they walk. Hence we believe the city is a literal city, built of all the precious materials here described.

But how can this be the bride, the Lamb's wife? Answer. Inspiration has seen fit to speak of it under this figure, and with us, that should be sufficient. The figure is first introduced in Isa. 54. The new-covenant city is there brought to view. It is represented as being desolate while the old covenant was in force, and the Lord's care was confined to the Jews and old Jerusalem, but it is said to her that the children of the desolate shall be many more than the children of the married wife. It is further said to her, "Thy Maker is thy husband," and the closing promise of the Lord to this city, contains a very similar description to the one which we have here in Revelation; namely, "I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones, and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." It is this very promise to which Paul refers, and upon which he comments in Galatians, when he says, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all;" for he quotes, in the next verse, this very prophecy of Isaiah's to sustain the declaration

which he makes. Here, then, Paul makes an inspired application of Isaiah's prophecy, which cannot be mistaken.

In addition to this we have the positive testimony of this twenty-first chapter of Revelation before us on this point. With this view there is harmony throughout. We have Christ as the Father of his people, Isa. 9:6, the Jerusalem above is called our mother, and we are the children; and under the figure of the marriage, we have Christ as the Bridegroom, the city as the bride, and we, the church, are the guests. There is no confusion of parties here. But the popular view which makes the city the church, and the church the bride, exhibits the inexcusable confusion of making the church to be at the same time, both mother and children, and both bride and guests.

The names of the twelve apostles in the foundations of the city, show it to be a Christian and not a Jewish city; while the names of the twelve tribes on the gates, show that all the saved from this dispensation as well as from the former, are reckoned as belonging to some one of the twelve tribes; for all must enter the city through some one of these twelve gates. It is this fact which explains those instances in which Christians are called Israel, and are addressed as the twelve tribes, as in Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6–8; James 1:1; Rev. 7:4, etc.

VERSE 15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as

the breadth ; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper ; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

We learn from this testimony that the city is laid out in a perfect square, measuring equally on all sides. The measure of the city, John tells us, was twelve thousand furlongs. Twelve thousand furlongs are fifteen hundred miles. We understand that this measure is the measure of the whole circumference of the city, and not merely of one side. This appears, from Kitto, to have been the ancient method of measuring cities. The whole circumference was taken, and that said to be the measure of the city. According to this rule, the New Jerusalem will be three hundred and seventy-five miles on each side. The length, breadth, and height of it are equal. From this language, the question has arisen whether the city was as high as it was long and broad. The word rendered equal, is ἴσον, (*ison*) and from definitions given in Liddell and Scott, we learn that it may have the sense of proportionate: the height was proportionate to the length and breadth. And this idea is strengthened by the fact that the wall was only a hundred and forty-four cubits high. Taking the cubit at about twenty-two inches, the length which is most commonly assigned to the ancient cubit, it would give only two hundred and sixty-four feet as the height of the

the wall. Now if the city is just as high as it is long and broad, that is, three hundred and seventy-five miles, this wall of less than three hundred feet would be, in comparison, a most insignificant affair. We think, therefore, that we are to judge of the height of the buildings of the city, in some measure, by the height of the wall, which is distinctly given.

The following criticisms on verse 16, the verse which gives the dimensions of the heavenly city, are undoubtedly correct :—

"It has been inferred from the above text that the New Jerusalem City is to be as high as it is long, and that its length will be twelve thousand furlongs, or *fifteen hundred miles.* It seems to us entirely unnecessary to place such a construction upon the language. The word equal does not always mean the same as to dimensions or position ; it is frequently used in the sense of proportion. If we were to say that the length and the breadth and the height of the city were in proportion, we should not violate the language." This view is taken of the text by Jas. Du Pui, A. M., in his "Exposition of the Apocalypse." The following from Thomas Wicks, author of Lectures on the Apocalypse, presents the same idea: "The language, however, will bear another meaning, which is far more natural. It is not that the length and breadth and height were severally equal *to each other*, but equal *with themselves;* that is, the length was everywhere the same, and the breadth everywhere the same, and the height the same. It was perfect and symmetrical in all its proportions.

This is confirmed by the fact distinctly stated, that the wall was one hundred and forty-four cubits high, or two hundred and sixteen feet, a proper height for a wall; while it is said that 'the length is as large as the breadth.'" This writer allows but 18 inches to the cubit.

The Greek word *isos*, which is translated *equal*, will, according to Pickering, bear the meaning of proportion. Greenfield, in defining another form of this word (*isotes*), gives to it the sense of "equal proportion," and refers to 2 Corinthians, 8:13, 14, as an example where this definition is quite admissible.

It would appear, therefore, that the height of the city was proportionate to its length and breadth, and not that it was as high as it was long. The text certainly admits of a more rational interpretation, and the one suggested above frees it from all ambiguity, and shows perfect harmony in the general description.

The building of the wall was of jasper. Jasper is a precious stone usually described as of "a beautiful bright green color, sometimes clouded with white or spotted with yellow." This we understand to be the material of the main body of the wall built upon the twelve foundations hereafter described. And let it be remembered that this jasper wall was "clear as crystal," verse 11, revealing all the glories within.

VERSE 19. **And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20; The fifth, sar-**

donyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

If we look upon this description as exclusively metaphorical, as is done by the great mass of those who profess to be Bible teachers, and spiritualize away this city into aërial nothingness, how unmeaning, yea, even bordering upon folly, do these minute descriptions appear. But if we take it, as it is evidently designed to be understood, in its natural and obvious signification, and look upon the city as the Revelator evidently designed we should look upon it, as a literal and tangible abode, our glorious inheritance, the beauties of which we are to look upon with our own eyes, how is the glory of the scene enhanced!

It is in this light, though it is not for mortal man, of himself, to conceive of the grandeur of those things which God has prepared for those that love him, that we delight to contemplate the glimpses that he has given us in his word of our future abode. We love to dwell upon those descriptions which convey to our minds, as well as language can do it, an idea of the loveliness and beauty which shall characterize our eternal home. And as we become absorbed in the contemplation of an inheritance tangible and sure, our courage springs up anew, hope revives, faith plumes her wings, and with feelings of thanksgiving to God that he has placed it within our power to gain an entrance to the mansions of the redeemed, we resolve anew, that, in spite of the world and all its obstacles, we will be among the sharers in the

proffered joy. Let us then look at the precious foundation stones of that great city through whose gates of pearl we hope soon to enter.

"The word adorned" [garnished], says Staurt, "may raise a doubt here, whether the writer means to say, that into the various courses of the foundation, ornamental precious stones were only here and there inserted. But taking the whole description together, I do not apprehend this to have been his meaning.

"Jasper, as we have seen above, is usually a stone of green, transparent color, with red veins. But there are many varieties.

"Sapphire is a beautiful azure or sky-blue color, almost as transparent and glittering as a diamond.

"Chalcedony seems to be a species of agate, or more properly the onyx. The onyx of the ancients was probably of a bluish white, and semi-pellucid.

"The emerald was of a vivid green, and next to the ruby in hardness.

"Sardonyx is a mixture of chalcedony and cornelian, which last is of a flesh-color.

"Sardius is probably the cornelian. Sometimes, however, the red is quite vivid.

"Chrysolite, as its name imports, is of a yellow or gold color, and is pellucid. From this was probably taken the conception of the pellucid gold, which constitutes the material of the city.

"Beryl is of a sea-green color.

"The topaz of the present day seems to be reckoned as yellow; but that of the ancients appears to

have been pale green. Plin. 38, 8, Bellermann. Urim et Thummin, p. 37.

"Chrysoprasus, of a pale yellow and greenish color, like a scallion; sometimes it is classed at the present day under topaz.

"Hyacinth, of a deep red or violet color.

"Amethyst, a gem of great hardness and brilliancy, of a violet color, and usually found in India.

"In looking over these various classes, we find the first four to be of a green or bluish cast, the fifth and sixth, of a red or scarlet; the seventh, yellow; the eighth, ninth, and tenth, of different shades of the lighter green; the eleventh and twelfth of a scarlet or splendid red. There is classification, therefore, in this arrangement; a mixture not dissimilar to the arrangement in the rainbow, with the exception that it is more complex."

VERSE 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Whether we understand that these gates were of solid pearl, or whether composed of pearls thickly set in a frame-work of some other precious material, does not materially affect the testimony. If it should be objected that it would be contrary to the nature of things to have a pearl large enough for a gate, we reply that God is able to produce it; the objection simply limits the power of God. But in either case the gates would outwardly have the appearance of pearl, and, in ordinary language, would be described

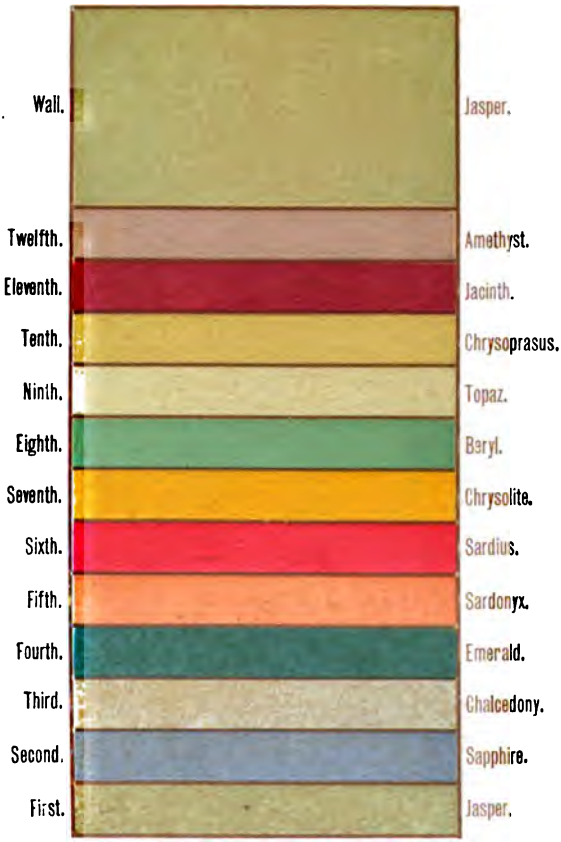

PLATE III.—ORDER OF COLORS IN THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

NOTE.—This illustration is not designed to show the proportion between the foundation and the wall, nor the particular construction of the foundation. Some think the different stones are arranged around the city in sections; others that they are superimposed horizontally upon each other, in the form of terraces, each color extending continuously around the city, the whole being arranged in steps from the ground to the wall, there being a sufficient number of steps to each precious stone to make the whole of suitable hight. With this arrangement the city would seem to rest upon a vast and complex rainbow. And when we consider that the glory of God and the Lamb will shine through all these and blend the colors in dazzling splendor, we may well conclude it will present a scene of glory of which no mind can form any adequate conception.

as gates of pearl. In this verse, as also in verse 18, the city is spoken of as built of gold, pure, like unto clear glass, or, as it were, transparent glass. We do not conclude from this language, that the gold is of itself transparent. Take that, for instance, which composes the street. If it were really transparent, it would simply permit us to look through and behold whatever was beneath upon which the city rested; and it would not seem that this would have any specially pleasing effect. But let us suppose the golden pavement of the street so highly polished as to have perfect powers of reflection, like the truest mirror, and we can see at once that the effect would be grand and striking in the extreme. Think for a moment what the appearance of a street so paved would be. The gorgeous palaces on either side would be reflected beneath, and the boundless expanse of the heavens above would also appear below; so that to the person walking those golden streets, it would appear that both himself and the city were suspended between the boundless expanse above and the unfathomable depths below; while the mansions on either side of the street, having equal powers of reflection, would marvelously multiply both palaces and people, and conspire to render the whole scene, novel, pleasing, beautiful, and grand beyond conception.

VERSE 22. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

With the temple is connected the idea of sacrifices

and a mediatorial work; but when the city is located upon the earth, there will be no such work to be performed. Sacrifices and offerings, and all mediatorial work based thereon, will be forever passed; hence there will be no need of the outward symbol of such work. But the temple in old Jerusalem, besides being a place for sacrificial worship, was the beauty and glory of the place; and, as if to anticipate the question that might arise, as to what would constitute the ornament and glory of the new city if there was to be no temple therein, the prophet answers, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." We understand that there is now a temple in the city. Chap. 16:17. What becomes of that temple when the city comes down, revelation does not inform us. Possibly it is removed from the city; or, it may be put to such a different use as to cease to be the temple of God.

VERSE 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

It is in the city alone, probably, that there is no night. There will of course be days and nights in the new earth, but they will be days and nights of

surpassing glory. The prophet, speaking of this time, says, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isa. 30:26. But if the light of the moon in that state is as the light of the sun, how can there be said to be night there? Answer. The light of the sun shall be seven-fold; so that, although the night is as our day, the day will be seven-fold brighter, making a contrast between day and night there, as marked, perhaps, as at the present time; but both will there be surpassingly glorious.

Verse 24 speaks of nations and kings. The nations are the nations of the saved; and we are all kings in a certain sense, in the new-earth state. We possess a "kingdom," and are to "reign" forever and ever.

But it appears from some of our Saviour's parables, as in Matt. 25:21, 23, that some will occupy in a special sense the position of rulers, and may thus be spoken of as kings of the earth, in connection with the nations of the saved. These bring their glory and honor into the city, when, on the Sabbaths and new moons, they there come up to worship. Isa. 66:23.

Reader, do you want a part in the unspeakable and eternal glories of this heavenly city? See to it, then, that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life; for only such can enter there.

Chapter XXII.

THE TREE AND RIVER OF LIFE.

VERSE 1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The angel continues to show John the wonderful things of the city of God. In the midst of the street of the city was the tree of life. Although the word street is here used in the singular number, with the definite article "the" before it, we do not understand that there is but one street in the city; for there are twelve gates and there must of course be a street leading to each gate. But the street here spoken of, is *the* street by way of distinction; it is the main street, or, as the original word signifies, the broad way, the great avenue. The tree of life is in the midst of this street; but the tree of life is on either side of the river of life; hence the river of life is also in the midst of the street of the city. This river proceeds from the throne of God. The picture thus presented before the mind is this: The glorious throne of God at the

head of this broad way or avenue, out of that throne the river of life flowing lengthwise through the center of the street, and the tree of life growing on either side and forming a high and magnificent arch over that majestic stream, and spreading its life-bearing branches far away on either side. How broad this broad street is, we have no means of determining; but it will be at once perceived that a city three hundred and seventy-five miles on each side, would be able to devote quite an ample space to its great avenue.

The Tree of Life. But how can the tree of life be but one tree, and still be on either side of the river? 1. It is evident that there is but one tree of life. From Genesis to Revelation it is spoken of as but one—*the* tree of life. 2. To be at once on both sides of the river, it must have more than one trunk, in which case it must be united at the top or in its upper branches, in order to form but one tree John, caught away in the Spirit, and presented with a minute view of this wonderful object, says that it was on either side of the river. Another, who has been privileged to behold in vision the marvelous glories of the heavenly land, has borne similar testimony: "We all marched in, and felt that we had a perfect right in the city. Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water; and on either side of the river was the tree of life. At first I thought I saw two trees; but I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree.

So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious, which looked like gold mixed with silver."—*Experience and Views*, pp. 12, 13. And why should such a tree be looked upon as unnatural or incredible, since we have an illustration of it here upon earth. The banyan tree of India is of precisely the same nature in this respect. Of this tree the Encyclopedia Americana thus speaks: "The *ficus Indica* (Indian fig, or banyan tree) has been celebrated from antiquity from its letting its branches drop and take root in the earth, which, in their turn become trunks, and give out other branches, a single tree thus forming a little forest." Thus we believe the tree of life extends and supports itself. The tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruits, and yields its fruit every month, probably one kind each month. This fact throws light upon the declaration in Isa. 66:23, that all flesh shall come up from one new moon to another to worship before the Lord of hosts. The word new moon should be rendered month. The redeemed come up to the city from month to month to partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations; literally, the *service* of the nations, not implying that any will enter the city in a diseased or deformed condition to need healing; and even if so, the work would soon be done, and then what would the leaves be for? We understand that the service of the leaves, whatever it is, will be perpetual, like the use of the fruit.

VERSE 3. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

This language proves that the great God, the Father, is referred to, as well as the Son.

VERSE 4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

The word, his, in the sentence, "And they shall see his face," refers to the Father; for it is the one whose name is in their foreheads; and that is the Father, as we learn from chap. 14:1.

VERSE 5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever. 6. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7. Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Here again we have the declaration that there shall be no night in the city; for the Lord God will be the light of the place. Verse 7 proves that Christ is the speaker, a fact which it is of especial importance to bear in mind in connection with verse 14. To keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book is to obey the duties brought to view in connection with the prophecy, as, for instance, in chap. 14:9–12.

VERSE 8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God. 10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

For remarks on verse 9, see on chap. 19:10. In verse 10 John is told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Popular theology says that the book is sealed. One of two things follows from this: either John disobeyed his instructions, or popular theology is fulfilling Isa. 29:10–14. Verse 11 proves that probation closes, and the cases of all are unalterably fixed before the coming of Christ; for in the very next verse Christ says, "Behold, I come quickly." What dangerous and insane presumption, then, to claim as Age-to-come believers do, that there will be probation even after that event! Christ's reward is with him, to give every man as his work shall be; which is another conclusive proof that there can be no probation after that event; for all the living wicked, those "who know not God," the heathen, and those "who obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," the sinners of Christian lands, 2 Thess. 1:8, will be visited with swift destruction from Him who then comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on his foes.

The declaration of verse 11, marks the close of

probation, which is the close of Christ's work as mediator. But we are taught by the subject of the sanctuary that this work closes with the examination of the cases of the living in the investigative Judgment. When this is accomplished, the irrevocable fiat can go forth. But when the cases of the living are reached in the work of Judgment, we apprehend that what remains to be done will be so speedily accomplished that all these cases may almost be said to be decided simultaneously. We have therefore no occasion to speculate as to the order of work among the living, that is, whose cases will be decided first, and whose last, nor whether it will be known that any are decided before all is finished.

VERSE 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Christ here applies to himself the appellation of Alpha and Omega. As applied to him, the expression must be taken in a more limited sense than when applied to the Father, as in chap. 1 : 8. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of the great plan of salvation. Verse 14, as before noticed, is the language of Christ. The commandments of which he speaks are his Father's. Reference can be had only to the ten commandments as delivered on Mt. Sinai. He pronounces a blessing upon those who keep them. Thus in the closing chapter of the word of God, and near the very close of the last testimony which the faithful and true Witness there left for his

people, he solemnly pronounces a blessing upon those who keep the commandments of God. Let those who believe in the abolition of the law, weigh well this fact.

VERSE 15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Dog is the Bible symbol of a shameless and impudent man. Who would wish to be left in the company of those whose lot is outside of the city of God! yet how many will stand condemned as idolaters, how many as those who make lies, and how many more as those who love them and love to circulate them after they are made!

VERSE 16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Jesus testifies these things in the churches, showing that the whole book of Revelation is given to the seven churches; which is another incidental proof that the seven churches are representatives of the church through the entire gospel dispensation. Christ is the offspring of David, in that he appeared on earth in the line of David's descendants. He is the root of David, inasmuch as he is the great antitype of David, and the maker and upholder of all things.

VERSE 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Thus are all invited to come. The Lord's love for mankind would not be satisfied in merely preparing the blessings of eternal life, opening the way to them, and announcing that all might come who would; but he sends out an earnest invitation to come. He sets it forth as a favor done to himself, if persons will come and partake of the infinite blessings provided by his infinite love. His invitation, how gracious! how full! how free! None of those who are finally lost will ever have occasion to find fault with the provisions that have been made for their salvation. They can never find fault with the light that has been granted to show them the way of life. They can never find fault with the invitations and entreaties that Mercy has given them to turn and live. From the very beginning there has been a power exerted, as strong as could be and still leave man his own free agent,—a power to draw him Heavenward and raise him from the abyss into which he had fallen. Come! has been the entreaty of the Spirit, from the lips of God himself, from the lips of his prophets, from the lips of his apostles, and from the lips of his Son, even while in his infinite compassion and humility he was paying the debt of our transgression.

The last message of mercy that is now going forth, is another and final utterance of divine long-suffering and compassion. Come, is the invitation it gives. Come, for all things are ready. And the last sound that will fall from Mercy's lips on the ear of the sinner, ere the thunders of vengeance burst upon him,

will be the heavenly invitation, Come. So great is the loving-kindness of a merciful God to rebellious man. Yet they will not come. Acting independently and deliberately, they refuse to come. So when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out, they will have no one to accuse, no one to blame but their own selves. They will be brought to feel this in all its bitterness; for the time will come in which it will be as described by Pollok, when he says,

> 'And evermore the thunders murmuring spoke
> From out the darkness, uttering loud these words,
> Which every guilty conscience echoed back:
> 'Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.'
> Dread words! that barred excuse, and threw the weight
> Of every man's perdition on himself
> Directly home———
> 'Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.'"

The bride also says, Come. But the bride is the city, and how does that say, Come? If we could be strengthened to behold the living glories of that city, and live, and should be permitted to gaze upon its dazzling beauty, and be assured that we had a perfect right to enter therein, and bathe in that ocean of bliss and blessedness, and revel in its glory forever and ever, would it not then say to us, Come, with a persuasion which no power could resist? Who of us in view of this could turn away and say, I have no desire for an inheritance there?

But though we cannot now look upon that city, the unfailing word of God has promised it, and that is sufficient to inspire in us an implicit and living

faith; and through the channel of that faith it says to us, Come. Come, if you would inherit mansions where sickness, sorrow, pain, and death, can never enter; if you would have a right to the tree of life, and pluck its immortal fruit, and eat and live; if you would drink of the water of the river of life, that flows from the throne of God, clear as crystal. Come, if you would obtain through those glittering gates of pearl an abundant entrance into the eternal city; if you would walk its streets of transparent gold; if you would behold its glowing foundation stones; if you would see the King in his beauty on his azure throne. Come, if you would sing the jubilee song of millions, and share their joy. Come, if you would join the anthems of the redeemed with their melodious harps, and know that your exile is forever over and this is your eternal home. Come, if you would receive a palm of victory, and know that you are forever free. Come, if you would exchange the furrows of your careworn brow for a jeweled crown. Come, if you would see the salvation of the ransomed myriads, the glorified throng which no man can number. Come, if you would drink from the pure fountain of celestial bliss, if you would shine as the stars forever in the firmament of glory, if you would share in the unutterable rapture that fills the triumphant hosts as they behold before them unending ages of glory ever brightening, and joys ever new.

The bride *does* say, Come. Who of us can resist the invitation? The word of truth is pledged to us

that if we keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we *shall* have right to the tree of life, we *shall* enter in through the gates into the city. And we shall feel that we are at home in our Father's house, amid those gorgeous splendors, and that these very mansions were prepared for us; and we shall realize the full truth of those cheering words, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19:9.

"Let him that heareth say, Come." We have heard of the glory, of the beauty, of the blessings, of that goodly land, and we say, Come. We have heard of the river with its verdant banks, of the tree with its healing leaves, of the ambrosial bowers that bloom in the Paradise of God, and we say, Come. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.

VERSE 18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. 19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

What is it to add to, or take from, the book of this prophecy? Let it be borne in mind that it is the book of this prophecy, or the Revelation, which is the subject of remark; hence the additions or detractions are to be from this book. Nothing can be called an addition to this book except something added with an effort to palm it off as a part of the

genuine book of Revelation. To take from it would be to suppress some of it. As the book of Revelation could not be called an addition to the book of Daniel, so if God should see fit to make further revelations to us by his Spirit, it would be no addition to the book of Revelation, unless it should claim to be a part of that book.

VERSE 20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The word of God is given to instruct us in reference to the plan of salvation. The second coming of Christ is to be the climax and completion of that great scheme; it is most appropriate, therefore, that the book should close with the solemn announcement, Behold, I come quickly. Be it ours to join with fervent hearts in the response of the apostle, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Thus closes the volume of inspiration—closes with that which constitutes the best of all promises, and the substance of the Christian's hope, the return of Christ. Then shall the elect be gathered and bid a long farewell to all the ills of this mortal life. How rich in all that is precious to the Christian is this promise. Wandering an exile in this evil world, separated from the few of like precious faith, he longs for the companionship of the righteous, the communion of saints. Here he shall obtain it; for all the good shall be gathered, not from one land only, but from all lands; not from one age only, but from all ages,—the great harvest of all

the good, coming up in long and glorious procession, while angels shout the harvest home, and the timbrels of Heaven sound forth in joyous concert,—and a song before unheard, unknown, in the universe, the song of the redeemed, shall add its marvelous notes of rapture and melody to the universal jubilee. So shall the saints be gathered, to be joyful in each other's presence forever and ever,

> "While the glory of God, like a molten sea,
> Bathes the immortal company."

This gathering has nothing in it but that which is desirable. The saints can but sigh and pray for it. Like Job, they cry out for the presence of God. Like David, they cannot be satisfied till they awake in his likeness. In this mortal condition we groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon. We can but be "upon tiptoe" for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Our eyes are open for its visions; our ears are waiting to catch the sounds of the heavenly music, and our hearts are beating in anticipation of its infinite joy. Our appetites are growing sharp for the marriage supper. We cry out for the living God, and long to come into his presence. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. No news more welcome than to know that the command has gone forth from the Lord to his angels, Gather together unto me my elect from the four winds of heaven.

The place of the gathering has nothing but attraction. Jesus, the fairest among ten thousands, is there. The throne of God and the Lamb, in the

glory of which the sun disappears as the stars vanish in the light of day, is there. The city of jasper and gold, whose builder and maker is God, is there. The river of life, sparkling with the glory of God and flowing from his throne in infinite purity and peace, is there. The tree of life, with its healing leaves and life-giving fruit, is there. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Noah, Job, and Daniel, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, the perfection of heavenly society, will be there. Visions of beauty are there; fields of living green, flowers that never fade, streams that never dry, products in variety that never end, fruits that never decay, crowns that never dim, harps that know no discord, and all else of which a taste purified from sin and raised to the plane of immortality can form any conception, or think desirable, will be there.

We must be there. We must bask in the forgiving smiles of a God to whom we have become reconciled, and sin no more; we must have access to that exhaustless fount of vitality, the fruit of the tree of life, and never die; we must repose under the shadow of its leaves, which are for the service of the nations, and never again grow weary; we must drink from the life-giving fountain, and thirst nevermore; we must bathe in its silvery spray, and be refreshed; we must walk on its golden sands, and feel that we are no longer exiles; we must exchange the cross for the crown, and feel that the days of our humiliation are ended; we must lay down the staff and take the palm branch, and feel

that the journey is done; we must put off the rent garments of our warfare, for the white robes of triumph, and feel that the conflict is ended and the victory gained; we must exchange the toil-worn, dusty girdle of our pilgrimage, for the glorious vesture of immortality, and feel that sin and the curse can nevermore pollute us. O day of rest and triumph, and every good, delay not thy dawning! Let the angels at once be sent to gather the elect. Let that promise be fulfilled which bears in its train these matchless glories. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

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